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# Studies in the Epistles and Revelation

BY

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FOR

ADVANCED TRAINING-CLASSES, ADULT  
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**TEACHER'S EDITION**

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# **STUDIES IN THE EPISTLES AND REVELATION**

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## **LESSON I.**

### **A Preview of the Epistles**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION, PURPOSE AND METHOD**

"I am determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ and him crucified." The world is so large, so wonderful, so beautiful, that no one can personally see and comprehend it all. We get our knowledge of it from the testimony of others, coupled with our own personal experience. So it is with "Jesus Christ our Lord." In this brief outline study I shall hope only to give the viewpoint from which each of the writers of the Epistles and Revelation saw the Christ, outline the vision, and bid you make it a part of your own life. We shall dwell on those doctrines that vitally shape Christian life and character in practical Christian living.

**1. In Line with Our Times.**—This is in line with the religious thought of our times, the cry of which

is, "Back to Christ!" Even here a word of caution is necessary, because this often means back of the apostles and their unfolding of the larger ministry of the Christ; back of Pentecost and the household of Cornelius. The personal ministry of Jesus was but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. His message to us Gentiles is in the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles and Revelation. They contain every truth announced in Christ's personal ministry, but with this larger application. Then, back to Christ should mean back to him as seen and proclaimed and lived in the ideals of the approved ambassadors of the risen and glorified Lord and Master. Modern scholarship has done much to turn Christian thought from doctrines about the Christ to the personal Son of God, though not always so designed. The movement of modern thought is Christward.

**2. Knowledge of God and Man.**—This is the only way we may understand and know God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1: 18; 1 John 4: 12). "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son hath revealed him" (John 6: 44-47). To know both God and man, we must know the Christ, because he is God's ideal of man and man's ideal of God.

**3. Structure of New Testament.**—The entire New Testament is a series of co-ordinating, rather than successive, attempts to interpret the Christ.

(1) **The Gospels.**—The Gospels are historic, and

are written to produce faith in the divine "Son of man."

(2) **Acts.**—Acts is historic, declaring the regnancy of Jesus Christ and showing how all classes of men accepted him, entering into the life of blessing and power, or how they continued to reject and defy him.

(3) **The Epistles.**—The Epistles were written to those who were in Christ Jesus, teaching "that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world." They are not a simple, but a complex and manifold, idea of Christ's wonderful personality and the individual's duties arising therefrom. Every duty, privilege and blessing grows out of the Christian's relationship to "Jesus Christ our Lord."

(4) **Revelation.**—The prophecy of the Book of Revelation is that Christ and the redeemed are ultimately to triumph over Satan, sin and death, and that God is to be all and in all.

**4. Viewpoints in the Epistles.**—There are six types of thought in the Epistles: Pauline, Hebraic, Jacobean, Petrine, Judan and Johannean.

(1) They all have the following points in common: they attempt to interpret the Christ through the history, literature, religion and life of God's people.

(2) They all agree

a. In the historical reality of Jesus Christ. Without him they are meaningless.

b. The Epistles are written to communities and

individuals whose very life is drawn from him, and refer to ordinances and institutions which commemorate his life and death. It would be easier to read Washington out of the world by far.

c. They all agree in the transcendence of his personality and authority.

d. None of them give much of the history of his life, but build every system of thought upon the fact that his history is well known, which is the strongest evidence.

e. All agree to his sinless life, his death, resurrection and exaltation at the right hand of God. Everything hinges on these facts. If they be established, then miracles and revelation fall easily into their place. If it were impossible for death to hold him, because of his divine life, and he came that we might be partakers of the divine nature, then it is impossible that death shall hold us. Everything depends on the answer to the question, "What think ye of the Christ? Whose son is he?"

f. They are all monotheists.

(3) They differ in their viewpoint and the attributes of the Christ they emphasize. If we would understand this divine man, and our relation to him, we must see him as all saw him.

a. Paul interprets Christ through the Messianic promises and prophetic ideals. His is the view of scholar and philosopher. He saw all the law and prophets fulfilled in Jesus Christ our Lord, and the hope not only of Israel, but the world in him.

b. Hebrews interprets Christ through the ideal-

ized religious institutions of the Jews, especially the temple and priesthood.

c. James, as a disciple of the synagogue, interprets the Christ through the law, as understood and applied there. To him faith was practical; the gospel was the "inner law of the heart."

d. Peter speaks out of his personal knowledge of Christ, as the fulfillment of Israel's hope for the Messianic King. Hence his message is fundamentally one of authority.

e. Jude's Epistle is a supplement of Peter's, declaring there is no place for rebellion; in heaven, in the Gentile world, Israel or the church.

f. John presents two widely differing views.

(a) In the Epistles he reveals love as redemption's chief motive.

(b) In Revelation he interprets Christ through the elect, though hated and persecuted. His is the promise of final victory.

(4) Most perfect understanding of Christ is in combining all.

## **QUESTIONS ON THE PREVIEW**

### **1. Understanding the Christ.**

(1) How may we best understand the Christ?

(2) Show how Christian doctrines and duties are affected by various temperaments and personalities.

### **2. Movements of Religious Thought.**

(1) What is the danger of the cry "Back to Christ"?

(2) Whence Christ's message direct to Gentiles?

(3) What classes are addressed in the Gospels? in Acts? in the Epistles?

(4) What has been the influence of modern scholarship on Christian thought?

(5) What evidence have you of a more intelligent study of the divine personality of Jesus Christ?

### **3. Understanding God.**

(1) Can the person denying the divinity of Christ know God?

### **4. Divisions of New Testament Literature.**

(1) What is the difference in nature between Gospels and Acts and the Epistles? Purpose of each?

(2) Name the Epistles.

### **5. Types of Thought and Doctrine.**

(1) Name each type and why so designated.

(2) What points have all the Epistles in common?

(3) In what do they all agree?

(4) In what do they differ?



## DIVISION I. PAULINE EPISTLES

### Lesson II. Studies in Pauline Epistles

#### I. CLASSIFICATION OF PAUL'S EPISTLES

The Pauline Epistles may be classified as follows for convenience of memory, and as an aid to the understanding of the development of Paul's theology and his doctrines of the Christ.

**1. Second Coming** (1 and 2 Thessalonians).—Eschatological signifies the doctrine of the last things, and in these Epistles Paul presents the Christ as the divine Lord and Master, who is coming to reward his faithful servants and to punish the wicked and unfaithful. This is an application of the teachings of Christ's parables of the kingdom.

**2. Law and Gospel** (Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians and Galatians).—The authenticity of these great Epistles has never been disputed by any man of standing in the ranks of the opponents of Christianity. If these alone be granted, there is truth enough contained to establish the claims of the Christ. Their arguments are limited, however, by the Judaizers, who contended that the Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved. Paul shows the superiority of the gospel to the law at every point.

**3. The Transitional Epistle** (Philippians).—Now freed from the limitations of the legalistic dis-

cussion, Paul writes of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. Here, however, he is limited by a hortatory purpose and human weaknesses. His one theme is: "The mind of Christ is the secret of joy."

4. The Christological Epistles (Ephesians and Colossians).—In these, Paul's discussions become cosmical. The antithesis is now, not the law and gospel, the flesh and spirit, but the conflict between good and evil. The protagonists are Satan and the eternal Son of God. Satan is pressing the battle even into the heavenly places, but he can not prevail. Since the Christ is to be victorious, the disciples are exhorted to put on the whole armor of God, and, fighting with him, share in the victory.

In Ephesians, Paul exalts the church as the body of Christ. In Colossians, he exalts the Christ as head of the church. They are so closely associated in his mind that he uses 162 identical expressions in these two Epistles.

Here is a marked development in thought and plan from the conception of the Christ as given in Thessalonians and the *Law and Gospel* Epistles. This phenomenon is explained, not by the change of Paul's idea of Christ so much as in the circumstances calling forth the Epistles, and Paul's own condition of mind and body. In the first Epistles, he is in the thick of the fight. In the *Second Coming* Epistles, he is encouraging those who were being persecuted unto death for Christ's sake. In the *Law and Gospel* Epistles, he is defending the rights

and liberties of the Gentile Christians against the Judaizers. In the latter Epistle, he is a prisoner, with time to meditate on the greatness of the conflict and its final victory. In this way, surely he could say that his bonds had turned out for the furtherance of the gospel.

**5. The Pastoral Epistles** (1 and 2 Timothy, Titus and Philemon).—In the pastoral Epistles there is only one doctrinal discussion. Perhaps the term "Personal Epistles" would be a more apt title for them. They are unlike the other nine Epistles in that these were written to individuals rather than to congregations. 1 Timothy and Titus may properly be termed "pastoral" because they are written to prominent ministers concerning the organization and care of the churches; while 2 Timothy and Philemon are almost entirely personal in character.

## II. THE OLDEST CHRISTIAN LITERATURE

**1. Authenticity of 1 and 2 Thessalonians.**—The authenticity of 1 and 2 Thessalonians has been assailed time and again. The last attempt was by rationalistic critics who attempted to assign them to a later date. But, by their own methods of historic criticism, these have been confirmed as Pauline in authorship. They are doubtless the oldest Christian literature preserved to us. There is probably older material in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles, but as books they were written later.

**2. The Law and Gospel Epistles.**—The *Law and*

*Gospel* Epistles are the oldest undisputed apostolic writings, and, as such, alone contain enough divine truth to meet and defeat all assailants if known and properly used. These facts have decided our method of treatment of the Epistles.

**3. Divine Revelation.**—Argument for revelation is strongly based on the fact that this system was not only formulated, but put in elegant literary style, within a generation of the birth of Jesus. The child that was born at the time of his crucifixion had not reached its majority when Paul wrote his first Epistles. And this was done by a man who was not his personal disciple. There was no time for the evolving of such a system of thought, including the desire of the Jews, the loyalty of Christians and the hope of the world. It must have been by revelation from the Lord, as Paul claimed.

**4. Christological, Not Theological.**—In materiality the system is the same in all Paul's Epistles, though more developed in the later writings. He interprets God, the universe, man, the cause, course and end of all things, in the terms of Jesus Christ. His thought is Christological rather than theological.

**5. Historical and Interpretative Significance.**—This system of Paul's has a historical and interpretative significance. The paucity of historical references given by Paul is remarkable. He gives only one or two sayings of Jesus (1 Cor. 7:10, 11 and 9:14). He mentions his descent and birth (Rom. 1:3; 9:5; Gal. 3:16;

4: 4); the institution of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11: 23-26); and his death and resurrection (1 Cor. 15: 1-8). This is all the history recorded, but the Epistles are filled with his personality, and without the gospel facts we can never interpret the Epistles, for this is the very groundwork of Paul's thought. Every message to man he developed from the fact of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15: 17).

Paul seems to be the first to elaborate the thought announced by Jesus and preached by Stephen, that Christ's Messiahship involved his divinity. In the Gospels the name "Jesus" is personal, and "the Christ" was an official title; but in the Epistles the personal name "Jesus" has become official, and the official name "Christ" has become personal. The attributes of the office become those of the person presented, while the personal qualities of this great life are added to the office of the Messiah. Paul makes this unity prominent, and nearly always combines the names, which are significant, "Jesus Christ our Lord."

Paul emphasizes His divine sonship, and then elaborates his system from the personality of Jesus rather than from his Messiahship. This primary fact becomes the constructive factor of Paul's thought; from this comes every duty of man. If, indeed, He be the Son of God, who died for us and arose again, assuring our resurrection, and is exalted at the right hand of God to be both Lord and Christ, then it follows that all men everywhere owe everything of love, loyalty and

service to Him. This was the mainspring of Paul's own life.

### III. PAUL'S SERVICE TO CHRISTIANITY

Paul's service to Christianity is manifested in its missionary impulse and its freedom from the prejudices of Jewish bigotry. Disciples from Judea, and Jews of the synagogue in the cities where Paul went, opposed the reception of Gentiles into the church without circumcision.

The system of the earlier Epistles and their limitations is determined by this Judaistic opposition. He has before him continually the history, institutions, persons, terms and promises of the Old Testament history; but he reverses the method of the Judaizer. He reads the Christ into the Old Testament, instead of his Jewish conception of the Old Testament into the Christ. Had they succeeded, the new religion would have burst the old wine-skin of Judaism into which they tried to put it, and both would have been lost.

### QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

#### I. Classification.

1. What is eschatology? Why the Second-coming Epistles so called?
2. What are the Law and Gospel Epistles? What is their aim?
3. What is peculiar of Philippians?
4. Which are the Christological Epistles? What is the fundamental difference between them?



5. Which are the pastoral Epistles, and why so called?

**II. What is the Oldest Christian Literature?**

1. Which is undisputedly apostolic, and what its value?

2. Arguments for revelation of these Epistles.

3. What historical facts does Paul enumerate?

4. What does Paul add to Messianic ideals?

5. What is the constructive factor in Paul's system?

6. What follows if Jesus is God's Son?

**III. Paul's Service to Christianity.**

1. Name some influences of his life on Christianity.

2. What would have been the result on Judaism and Christianity had the opposition prevailed?

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## **PART I. THE SECOND-COMING EPISTLES**

### **Lesson III. 1 and 2 Thessalonians**

#### **THE COMING OF CHRIST AND HIS REWARD**

Eschatology is the science of the last things; death; the judgment and eternal rewards and punishments. It is remarkable that the first Epistles of Paul should treat of the last things. But the Christian who does not keep them in view from the beginning will make a very feeble fight against self, sin and Satan. Hence the study of these Epistles should come first, both logically and chronologically. They were written from Corinth not later than 54 A. D.

## I. "THE CITY AND CHURCH OF THE THESSALONIANS" (1:1—A. R. V.)

**1. The City.**—Thessalonica, now Saloniki, was, at the time of Paul's writing, a very prosperous city, composed of Greeks, Romans and Jews. It was situated at the northeastern corner of the Thermaic Gulf, on the great Egnatian road which formed the main line of communication between Rome and the East. It was one hundred miles west of Philippi, whence Paul came (Acts 20: 6: 40-17: 1). It was an important commercial city; one of the trade-centers of Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess. 1: 8). For this very reason Paul doubtless chose it. It was founded by Cassander, king of Macedon, in 315 B. C., and named for his wife. It was conquered by Rome in 168 B. C., and in 42 B. C. became a Roman colony. It has maintained an important place throughout all these years.

**2. The Synagogue.**—This was the center of the Jewish life. They were devout and aggressive, as shown by the fact that many of the choicest spirits among the Gentiles frequented their place of worship. Thus the dispersion was preparing the way of the Lord. The synagogue worship consisted of singing Psalms; prayer, with the face of the worshiper turned toward Jerusalem; the reading of a lesson from both the law and the prophets, and then a discussion of the meaning and application of the truths of such Scripture. The Jews were proverbially hospitable, and always invited a stranger to speak on the lesson of the day. Thus,

in his providence, God provided his apostles with an audience seeking the truth; a text, pointing to his Son and their Christ; a place of worship, and leaders for the new church who, when they saw that Jesus was the fulfillment of their hopes, as proclaimed in their Scriptures, were able to teach and care for the flock. Church worship is decided by it.

To this city and its synagogue Paul came, attended by Silas (Acts 17: 1-4), in the course of his second missionary journey. He came with the marks of the lictor's rod upon his body (Acts 16: 22-33). To him they were the marks of the Lord Jesus, the signs of his voluntary bond-service (Acts 16: 22, 37; Gal. 6: 7; Deut. 15: 17). They were not warnings to change his course, but tokens of God's care, and of the fact that his Master had taken him into fellowship with himself in suffering and its consequent glory. He came with his confidence established in the gospel and God's power to save, as manifested at Philippi, and his heart was warmed with the memory of the disciples' benediction. We therefore do not wonder that, in spite of the malignity of the Jews, Paul kept his custom and made his way on the first Sabbath to the synagogue.

**3. Paul's Evangelistic Ministry.**—Paul's evangelistic ministry is suggested only by Luke (Acts 17: 2—A. R. V., Margin). He took their Scriptures—that is, the Old Testament—"opened" it as a treasure-box, and taught that "it behooved the Christ to suffer and rise again from the dead." This was

revolutionary, because the Jews had been in the habit of interpreting all the prophecies of suffering as fulfilled in themselves, the glory in their Messiah and his reign. When he had convinced them of his interpretation, then he proclaimed "Jesus is *the Christ*." Some of them were persuaded, but not many (Acts 17: 4; 1 Thess. 1: 9).

4. **The church** was prevailingly Gentile; a multitude of devout Greeks and "of the chief women not a few." Paul's stay was evidently longer than indicated in the seventeenth chapter of Acts. It was doubtless at the end of three weeks that he was driven from the synagogue; but he remained long enough to make his character and conduct impressive to the church. He had dealt with each as his own child (2: 11); had worked night and day with his own hands for a livelihood (2 Thess. 3: 8); and twice had received help from the brethren at Philippi (Phil. 4: 15, 16). All this would indicate a stay of some duration. Naturally the Jews thought when he was driven from their synagogue it would cripple his work. Then, when he continued with increasing success winning the Gentiles to his cause, they planned and executed a terrific persecution which swept him out of the city and prevented his return. This persecution endangered the church (Acts 17: 5-9). He tried in vain to get back to Thessalonica. Timothy seems to have remained, perhaps in hiding for a brief time. He later joins Paul and Silas at Berea. Hither the Jews of Thessalonica came with their malignity directed against Paul as the leader of

this Way. Silas and Timothy remained at Berea until Paul sent for them from Athens.

### 5. The Epistles.

(1) *Writing the Epistles.*—Writing the Epistles, or letters, came about in the most natural way. I suppose Paul had no idea he was writing Scripture, but rather a helpful, joyous letter to persecuted Christians. It met their needs, hence has always helped disciples in need. Paul had made himself an exile in a strange city; deprived himself of the companionship of Timothy, whom he loved best of all his helpers, to send him unto Thessalonica to see if they endured the storm of wrath (3: 1-6). He had been charged with treason (Acts 17: 7), and had doubtless been denied the privilege of returning to the city. This he calls the work of Satan. Timothy had not been included in the decree, so Paul sends him back to Thessalonica to encourage the brethren, and to bring him back word concerning his persecuted children in the gospel. He remained at Athens two or three weeks, and then goes down to Corinth, where Timothy and Silas join him with the good news of their faithfulness, that their faith and courage had become an inspiration to all Macedonia and Achaia, and at the same time Timothy brings a number of questions from the church, particularly about the dead who had offered their lives, doubtless in defense of the gospel.

(2) *The Salutation.*—The salutation in 1 and 2 Thessalonians is peculiar, in that Paul adds nothing to his name to indicate the character in which

he wrote; he does not call himself an apostle, nor a servant of Jesus Christ. His apostolic office had not been assailed by false brethren. His service had been so recent that all remembered it. He subscribes himself as one with Silas and Timothy and themselves.

These letters are addressed to the church of the Thessalonians "in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." No such a letter had ever been written before, because the community to whom addressed was a new thing. The word translated "church" was familiar enough to these Greek-speaking people, for it indicated a town assembly for public business. They had been "called out" of the world into God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, to attend to his business, to fight his battles, to live for him.

(3) *Conditions*.—The Epistles indicate that this young church had made a splendid record during its brief and turbulent life (1: 3, 7). Nothing could be more revolutionary than to become a Christian. Paul hence praises their faith, hope and love, and lovingly corrects their faults and expresses his anxiety for them. The Thessalonians were greatly distressed concerning their brethren who had died, lest they should be denied the privilege of seeing the second advent of our Lord. Paul explains the manner of the second coming (3: 13-5: 5), and calms their fears about their dead, and exhorts them to be *always* ready. He did not speak of the time except, as Jesus had, of its uncertainty, and urges them to be watchful. They seemingly mis-



understood his teaching concerning the second advent, and ceased their labors to simply watch. He wrote the second Epistle to correct this mistake, and to emphasize that other truth of Jesus, that that servant only is blessed whom the Lord shall find doing his work when he comes (Matt. 24: 36, 42; 25: 13). This is the real value of the doctrine of the second coming.

## II. SEED THOUGHTS

### 1. Doctrinal.

(1) The divinity of Christ. Paul speaks of Jesus as "Lord" twenty-five times in his first brief Epistle. He is the resurrection and the life (4: 14-18); the medium of salvation (5: 9); source of our life through death (5: 10). These passages are important in the earliest Christian writings, showing that the divinity of Christ was the basic truth of the gospel from the beginning. The second coming only emphasized this truth.

(2) The Lordship of Jesus as illustrated in the parables of Jesus (Matt. 24: 1-25: 46).

### 2. Practical and Revolutionary.

(1) Paul urges personal purity; impurity was the common vice among the heathen. The Greeks believed in the gratification of every fleshly appetite, the same as the desire for food.

(2) He insisted upon industry (2 Thess. 3: 7-10). Where slave labor was so common, manual labor was considered a disgrace. Paul dignified toil and restored God's design.

(3) He sings of brotherly love; a new bond by

which men are to be united in Christ, an ideal yet to be reached.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is Eschatology?
2. What is its practical value to the Christian?

#### I. The City and Church.

1. Give an account of its location, population and importance.
2. Write a brief history of Thessalonica.
3. Describe the synagogue worship and its relation to church services.
4. Give Paul's experience at Philippi and arrival in Thessalonica.
5. What was Paul's method of procedure?
6. How did the Jews interpret the prophecies of suffering?
7. Was Paul's ministry in Thessalonica brief or extended?
8. How did these Epistles come to be written?
9. What is peculiar in Paul's salutation to the Thessalonians, and why?
10. What is the meaning of the word "church"?
11. What questions disturbed this young church?

12. How did Paul come to write these Epistles.

#### II. Seed Thoughts.

1. How does Paul present the Christ?
2. How does Paul speak of the ministry of the Christ, and his relation to the disciples?
3. Discuss the doctrine of the second coming.
4. What assurance of the resurrection of the dead?

5. Did Paul expect the immediate advent of the Lord?

6. What revolutionary practices and customs did Paul insist upon?

7. Of what value is the doctrine of the second coming for Christians to-day?

8. Discuss the question of discipline, classes, methods and motives.

9. Discuss sanctification and preservation of saints.

### III. Analysis.

1. Give the main divisions of 1 Thessalonians.

2. Give an outline (from text) of the order of resurrection.

3. What called out the second Epistle?

4. Unite the doctrines of 1 Thess. 4: 13-5: 11 and 2 Thess. 1: 5-2: 17.

5. Give an outline of 2 Thessalonians.

6. Who is the "man of sin"? (2 Thess. 2: 3-12.)

7. Who were Paul's fellow-workers?

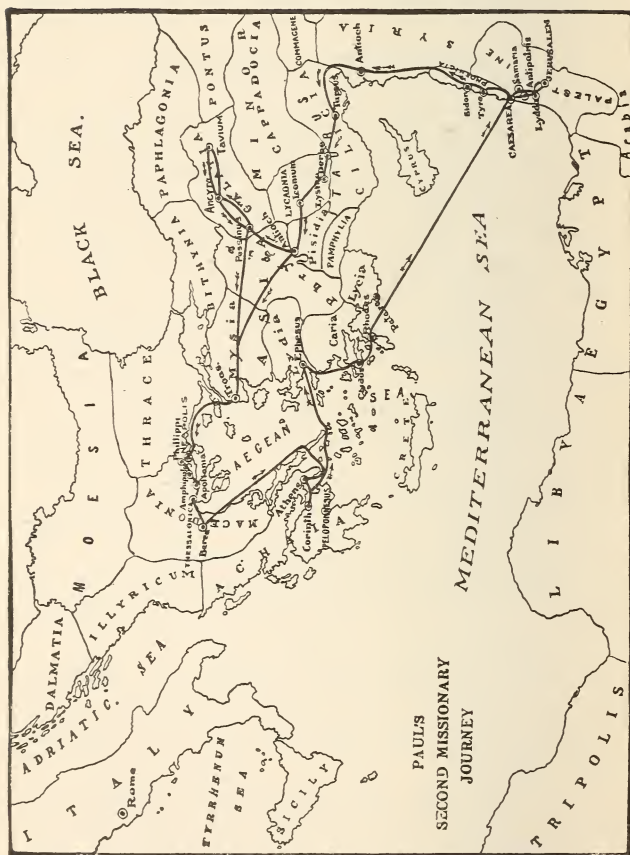
8. What noted preachers were produced by this church? (Acts 17: 1-13; 20: 4; 27: 2; Phil. 4: 16; 2 Tim. 4: 10.)

9. Mark the differences between the unbeliever and the disciple of the Lord at his coming.

10. Give the time and place of the writing of these Epistles.

11. Enumerate the things for which Paul prayed.

12. Name the things for which Paul commended the Thessalonians.



## **PART II. THE LAW AND GOSPEL EPISTLES**

### **LESSON IV. ROMANS.**

#### **Salvation by Faith in Christ**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION: THE APOSTLE PAUL AND HIS DOCTRINAL EPISTLES**

The foundations of Christian faith are laid in the narratives of the Gospels, but the first developments of the Christian system of doctrine are found in a collection of letters of which there are none greater than the Epistle to the Romans. Paul is ever conscious of the universality of sin, and its heinousness, and stoutly declares that acceptance with God is attainable only by faith that produces spirituality, not in ceremonialism; in heart-service, not in outward ritual; in the worship of loving deeds, not in forms of service; in being like God, not in doing the work of the law.

1. **The Apostle to the Gentiles.**—Paul was a Hebrew by descent; a native of Tarsus of Cilicia (Acts 21: 34-22: 3); of the tribe of Benjamin; of devout family (Phil. 3: 5); a Roman citizen (Acts 16: 35-39; 22: 25-29); a Pharisee (Acts 23: 6); a devout man (Gal. 1: 13, 14); finely educated (Acts 22: 3), not only at the school of Gamaliel, who was known as the beauty of the law (Acts 5: 34, 35), but he gives evidence of Greek culture.

Tarsus was the site of a great university. He was a member of the Sanhedrin (Acts 23: 1; 26: 10). A sustaining evidence of this is in the fact that, up to the time of his commission to Damascus, Luke gives the proceedings of the most secret meeting of the Sanhedrin, which he doubtless received from Paul. After this nothing of the kind is reported. He disputed with Stephen in the synagogue of the Cilicians (Acts 6: 8-10), and was defeated in argument (Acts 26: 11). He leads in the martyrdom of Stephen (Acts 6: 11-15; 7: 54-8: 1) and in the persecution of the church (Acts 8: 1-3; 9: 1, 2; 22: 4, 5; 26: 9-11; 1 Cor. 15: 9; Gal. 1: 13; 1 Tim. 1: 12, 13).

Saul's conversion was wonderful, but more natural than we sometimes think. Stephen's testimony and Christlike spirit (Acts 6: 8-15; 7: 1-8: 1) stuck the goad into his conscience (Acts 9: 5; 26: 14). Ananias told him what the Lord would have him do (Acts 9: 6, 10-18; 22: 12-16). The heavenly vision was primarily to qualify him to be an apostle and witness of the resurrection (Acts 9: 15, 16; 22: 14, 15; 26: 16-18; Gal. 1: 15, 16; Gal. 2: 7, 8; Rom. 1: 5; 1 Tim. 2: 7). He begins at once to preach among the Gentiles (Gal. 1: 15-17) and Jews (Acts 9: 19-25, 28, 29). Thus the leader of the opposition was turned into an advocate of Christianity and "so the church had peace and was multiplied" (Acts 9: 31). At the end of three years he visited Jerusalem (Gal. 1: 17, 18). He worked in Syria and Cilicia for about three years, and then was brought to Antioch by



Barnabas (Acts 11: 25, 26). He remained here a year (Acts 11: 26), at the close of which time he went with Barnabas to Jerusalem with a contribution for the relief of the Jewish brethren (Acts 11: 29, 30). Upon their return they were called of the Holy Spirit to the great missionary work to which Paul gave himself until he received his crown of martyrdom (Acts 12: 25; 13: 2). He made three missionary journeys; at the close of the third he was arrested in Jerusalem, retained at Cæsarea for ransom, and sent to Rome, where he abode in his own hired house a prisoner. It is generally believed that he was released, revisited the churches, went as far west as Spain, and was a second time imprisoned, and then beheaded. No other man ever entered more fully into the heroic life of service and suffering with the Master.

**2. The General Form of Pauline Epistles.**—There is a sameness of structure in all his Epistles, which form is psychological for his purpose.

(1) Salutation and statement of subject on his heart.

(2) Thanksgiving and praise for those addressed and a word of encouragement in Christian conduct.

(3) Doctrinal part.

(4) Application of the truth set forth in preceding section.

(5) Personal matters and messages.

(6) Autograph to authenticate the letter, which was usually written by an amanuensis.



## II. THE ROMAN CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

At the beginning of the Christian era Latin authors speak of the large number of Jews dwelling in the Imperial City. They occupied a certain section of the city, within the walls, and were allowed special privileges. They had their own synagogue. This colony was evidently enlarged by the captive Jews whom Pompey sent to Rome, when he captured Jerusalem in 63 B. C. The first message of the risen Lord was doubtless borne to the capital city by the "sojourners from Rome" who heard the message on "the day of Pentecost" (Acts 2: 10). Just when the church was organized, no one knows. The church was composed of both Jews and Gentiles, as indicated by Paul (Rom. 1: 6-13; 2: 17-24; 9: 13). When Paul wrote his Epistle he had not seen Rome (Rom. 1: 13). They were hospitable (Acts 28: 15), and had already become renowned (Rom. 1: 8).

## III. THE OCCASION AND TIME OF ROMANS

1. *The Occasion.*—Paul had often desired to visit this church, which was prevailingly Gentile (Rom. 1: 13, 14), and it seems that he has now completed his plans, to go to Jerusalem from Corinth and thence to Spain, stopping at Rome on his way (Rom. 15: 22-29). Since this is to be his first visit, it was a courteous thing to write this letter notifying them of his intention and plans. He desired them to aid him on his way to Spain, and, lest he might be misrepresented to them (2:

8), thus robbing him of their confidence and support, he takes this occasion to set forth the gospel which he believed and taught. This he does from chap. 1: 16-11: 36, the greatest doctrinal thesis ever written. It is the ripened fruit of his ministry of suffering and triumph, the substance of his preaching for over twenty years.

Paul had very likely planned to go to Rome on this third missionary journey, but there were at least two things that changed his plans: the need of the poor saints at Jerusalem, and the privilege of bearing the contributions of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia (Rom. 15: 26); and the fact that Jerusalem was now in the grip of the Egyptian Messianic pretender, who led four thousand religionists into the desert and returned to Jerusalem with a host of thirty thousand, only to be routed by the soldiers of Felix. This would disturb the Christian Jews, and was liable to awaken in them the false hope of a temporal king. In this crisis, no wonder he was willing to die at Jerusalem (Acts 21: 13). Everything was at stake for the mother church.

**2. Date.**—This letter was written from Corinth near the close of the three months spent there on his third missionary journey (comp. Acts 19: 21; 20: 1-3; Rom. 16: 23; 1 Cor. 1: 14) in the month of February, 58 A. D. He was being entertained in the house of Gaius, a prominent Corinthian Christian, and Tertius was his amanuensis. Phœbe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreæ, the seaport of Corinth, was about to sail for Rome.

She had helped many and had aided Paul. He desired to return her kindness, and introduces her to the brethren at Rome. This is the fourth year of Nero, who had given much promise of a wise and liberal government. The decree of Claudius, expelling the Jews, had been removed and many returned to the capital city. Among these were the beloved Aquila and Prisca; Paul's "well-beloved" Epænetus was here and his kinsmen, Andronicus and Junias, who were Christians before him, and also Herodian. Among those dear to Paul was Rufus, who was either his own brother or a foster-brother. There were gathered here in the Imperial City others who were dear to Paul, and hence there is no reserve in his expressions to the church of which his personal friends and relatives formed an important part (16: 3-15).

3. *Opposition to be Met.*—In the church were those who taught that one must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses to be saved, while others seemed to teach that to "just believe" was the only requisite to salvation. Without the church, and sometimes within, was the grossest immorality and the bitterest opposition of the orthodox Jews. It was to guard the church at the capital of the world from all these dangers that this letter was written.

#### IV. GENERALIZATION AND DISCUSSION

##### 1. *The Central Thought.*

(1) All have sinned and come under condemnation.

(2) One can be justified before the law in only one of two ways: either never to have violated the law, or, having violated it, to be pardoned.

(3) Having all sinned, hence all need a Saviour.

(4) Christ died for all, and hence is Lord of all.

(5) All Christians, through "obedience of faith," become members of Christ's body, are filled with his spirit, and have passed from condemnation into the glorious liberty and blessings of the sons of God.

With Paul sin was an awful thing, destructive of life, liberty and love. Redemption is a glorious manifestation of the wisdom, knowledge and judgment of God.

## **2. The Gospel unto Salvation.**

(1) The gospel is the good news of salvation.

(2) It is a gospel of power, hence is more than an ideal or a system of ethics.

(3) He who may possess this power is "every one that believeth."

(4) The condemnation which made the gospel necessary is revealed.

a. Gentiles in the wisdom, power and divinity of God, through created things and their own conscience. They "held down the truth in unrighteousness."

b. The Jewish law revealed the sinfulness of sin and its destructive influence; also a primary knowledge of the truth.

c. To a condemned race "the righteousness of God hath been manifested" in Christ Jesus. This is witnessed to by the Law and Prophets, and is

appropriated by faith of "every one who believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Gentile."

(5) Any one who really believes the story of the love of God, as manifested in Christ, can no longer live in sin. "Help thou our unbelief!"

### **3. Antithesis of the Gospel and Other Dispensations.**

(1) Adam brought sin and death; Christ brought forgiveness and eternal life.

(2) Adam's posterity is earthy and sensual; Christ's is heavenly and spiritual.

(3) To be in Adam is to sin and die; to be in Christ is to be righteous and, by grace, to live.

(4) Through one's disobedience came condemnation; through one's obedience, justification.

(5) By the disobedience of doubt man is separated from God; by obedience of faith in baptism he is in newness of life.

Faith is the condition of the spiritual birth (1: 17; 3: 21, 22; 5: 1).

(6) Circumcision was but the sign of separation; Christianity is its realization.

(7) The law condemns; the gospel saves.

(8) The law revealed the exceeding sinfulness of sin; Christ reveals the righteousness, love and grace of God.

(9) The Jews rejected; Christians elected unto life.

(10) Their sacrifices were offensive; the Christian's, acceptable.

(11) They were rebellious against all authority; the Christian is bound by the authority of love.

(12) They imposed heavy burdens; Christians bear the infirmities of the weak and each others' calamities.

The line of argument is determined by Judaistic opposition, and false report of Paul at Rome.

## QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

### I. Introduction.

1. Whence the foundations of our faith?
2. What fact made necessary the plan of redemption?
3. What the ground of acceptance with God?
4. Give an outline of Paul's life.
5. Discuss his conversion by steps.
6. Why the appearance of the risen Lord to Paul?
7. Give the general outline of all Paul's Epistles.

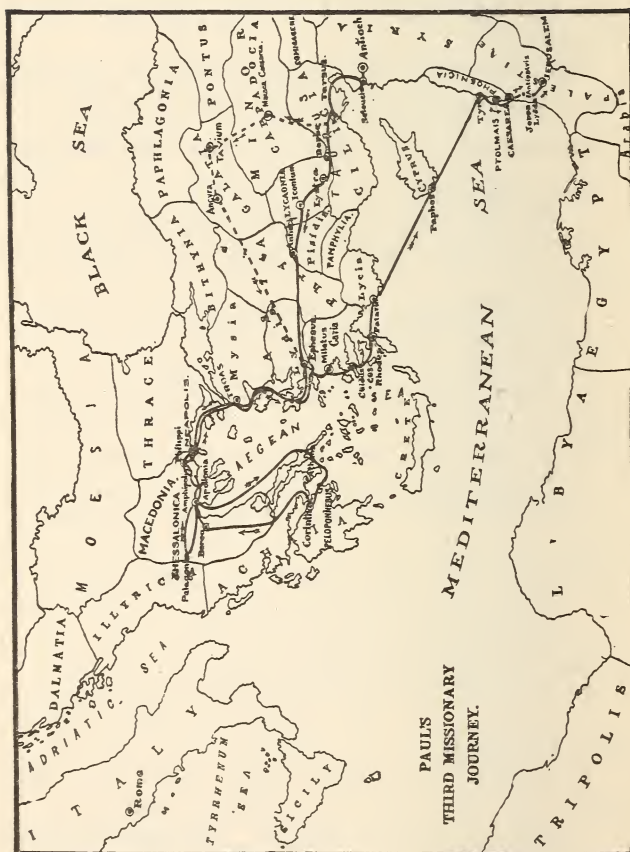
### II. The Roman Christian Church.

1. What do you know of Jewish residents of Rome?
2. Who likely proclaimed the first message of the risen Lord?
3. Who constituted the church?

### III. Occasion and Time.

1. Why did Paul write this Epistle?
2. Give some of the reasons why Paul had not gone to Rome?
3. Give the date of this Epistle and where written.
4. What personal friends did Paul have in Rome?
5. What opposition to be met in Rome?







**IV. Analysis of Romans.**

1. Give the general divisions.

(1) Introduction.

(2) How does Paul introduce himself?

(3) What does he claim for his Master?

(4) Upon what does Paul base his friendship for Romans?

2. Doctrinal treatise.

(1) What is the theme of his message?

(2) What its universality?

(3) What advantage or honor had the Jews above Gentiles?

(4) Give Paul's argument for justification by faith, in chapters 4 and 5.

3. What is the significance of baptism as recorded in chapter 6?

(1) Is it possible to turn back and serve sin?

(2) How must every soul die that has sinned?

4. Whence the victory over sin?

(1) Relative value of the law and gospel.

(2) How is the believer dead to the law?

5. Give the practical applications of this truth of "justification by faith."

(1) Give the cause of Israel's rejection.

(2) Is it to be permanent?

(3) How is God to overrule this to his own glory?

6. Show the logical connections of the twelfth chapter.

(1) What is the fulfillment of the law, and how?

(2) How is Christian liberty manifested?

7. What warnings against seducers?

(1) To whom alone are God's blessings?

8. Give the central thought of the Epistle.

(1) What was Paul's conception of sin? of justification?

(2) Give the antitheses in the Epistle to the Romans.

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## LESSON V.

### 1 CORINTHIANS

#### The Church the Medium of Christ's Work

##### I. THE CITY

When Paul visited Corinth it was the largest city in Greece, containing nearly a half-million people. In a commercial way it was the most important city in Achaia. The commerce of the world flowed through its two harbors: Lechæum and Cenchreæ.

It was situated on the isthmus joining Macedonia and Peloponnesus. Merchants, sailors, adventurers and refugees from all quarters abode here. The vices of both East and West met here and joined in the work of human degradation.

Its political importance is indicated by its history. When Greece was independent, and its influence was filling the world, Corinth was at the head of the Achæan League. In 146 B. C., Mummius, the Roman general, took and destroyed the

city. It lay waste for a century. In 46 B. C., Julius Cæsar rebuilt it, and soon its former splendor was restored. It practically became the capital of Greece.

Its religious and moral conditions were deplorable. Greek philosophy showed its decay in endless discussions about words and intellectual rather than moral issues. They denied the future life, for the sake of unlimited license in the present. Religion had been made to minister to the basest passions. Aphrodite had here a magnificent temple, in which a thousand priestesses ministered in shameless debauchery. The Jewish synagogue was the only institution where a religion of purity and moral integrity was taught. Here Paul began his ministry, as usual.

## II. THE CORINTHIAN CHURCH

All we can learn of the church at Corinth we must learn from the Acts of the Apostles (18: 1-18) and the two Epistles to the Corinthians. Paul came to Corinth from Athens, probably in the autumn of 52 A. D., and here end his labors of the second missionary journey (Acts 18: 1). He was alone and discouraged, for a time (Acts 18: 5; comp. 1 Thess. 3: 1). He abode with Aquila and Priscilla, working at his trade (Acts 18: 2, 3; 1 Cor. 9: 6-15; 2 Cor. 11: 7-9). At first he preached in the synagogue, both to Jews and Greek proselytes (Acts 18: 4). Afterwards he was joined by Silas and Timothy, who assisted in the ministry of power (Acts 18: 5; 2 Cor. 1: 19). When op-

posed by the Jews, they went to a private house near by and continued their testimony (Acts 18: 6, 7). Paul remained here a year and a half (Acts 18: 11, 18), and as the work succeeded the opposition grew, until Paul was arraigned before Gallio, brother of Seneca and proconsul of Achaia (Acts 18: 12-17). After this he sailed for Ephesus and thence to Cæsarea in 54 A. D. (Acts 18: 18-22).

### III. THE WRITING OF THE FIRST EPISTLE

**1. The Occasion.**—The Epistle itself gives the information as to time, place and occasion. Nothing could be more natural or imperative. Paul had reached Ephesus on his third missionary journey in A. D. 54 (Acts 19: 1), where he remained about three years (Acts 19: 8, 10; 20: 31). Rumors had come to him of a bad state of affairs in the church, caused by the pressure of heathen customs and Jewish opposition. To correct this he wrote a letter that is now lost (1 Cor. 5: 9). Some time had evidently elapsed when more definite reports of difficulties came through reliable parties (1 Cor. 1: 11; 16: 17), and the church in distress writes asking his advice on certain perplexing questions (1 Cor. 1: 1). These things furnish the occasion and give shaping to his first Epistle.

**2. Questions Involved.**—He had heard there were divisions and strife among them (1: 11; 3: 3). They tolerated heinous sins among them (5: 1); they went to law before heathen courts (6: 1); they degraded the Lord's Supper (11: 17-34);

They doubted the resurrection and preached their doubts (15: 1-58).

The church sent to him a letter, probably by Stephanas and his two companions (16: 17). They asked concerning marriage (7: 1-24); virginity (7: 25-40); things offered to idols (8: 1-13); spiritual gifts (12: 1-31); and the relative importance of speaking with tongues (14: 1-40). These demanded immediate attention, and it is very probable that Stephanas and his companions bore this Epistle back to the Corinthian church.

**3. Place and Time of Writing.**—It was written from Ephesus, some time before Pentecost (1 Cor. 16: 8); probably about the time of Passover (1 Cor. 5: 7, 8). Paul reached Ephesus on his third missionary journey in 54 A. D. (Acts 19: 1), and remained there about three years (Acts 19: 8, 10; 20: 31). This Epistle was written near the close of this period and prior to his journey into Macedonia and Achaia, in 57 A. D. (Acts 19: 21, 22; 1 Cor. 16: 5-9), which would make the probable writing 56 to 58 A. D. It was expected to reach Corinth before Timothy (1 Cor. 4: 17; 16: 10), who had been sent into Macedonia.

Some modern scholars infer from 2 Cor. 2: 1; 12: 14, 21; 13: 1, 2, that Paul made a visit to Corinth during the three years' residence at Ephesus, which is not recorded in Acts, and a majority think it was made before writing the first Epistle. This involves no difficulty or cause of alarm, since much of Paul's labors and experiences are not recorded in Acts (2 Cor. 11: 23-27).

#### IV. AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF 1 CORINTHIANS

**1. The Only Medium.**—In this Epistle Paul takes the ground that the church of Christ is the only medium of doing the work of the Master; it is his holy temple and should be preserved undefiled. In it they were called into the fellowship of Christ Jesus the Lord, and he assures them of God's faithfulness in this fellowship. In this Christ is supreme, above every other interest. From this high point of view he condemns the carnality of the Corinthian church, and because of this they were not realizing this divine fellowship.

**2. Divisions Condemned.**—The first evil condemned is that of the divisions among them. These were produced by the "wisdom of words." These divisions were destroying the temple of God, and such would God destroy. These divisions were classed as carnal, the works of the flesh, and Satan, which divided and weakened the body of Christ. Divisions have always had this effect in the church of Christ. The corrective of this schismatic condition was in a thorough understanding of "the Word of the Cross." Then follows a long discussion contrasting the "wisdom of words" and the wisdom of God revealed in "the Word of the Cross," dealing with the deep things of God, which the carnal mind can never receive. At base, these divisions were carnal. Each teacher, whatever his power or emphasis of gospel truth, was not building a new church, but was building on the only



foundation of Jesus Christ, and their work must finally be tested by him. The building is more important than the builder, because in this "the Spirit of God dwelleth." These teachers are only "ministers of Christ," and their responsibility is that of "stewards of the mystery of Christ." If they accepted this position, then all things were theirs—wisdom, workers, things present and things to come; but Christ is not theirs, they are Christ's.

**3. Lack of Discipline.**—The second evidence of carnality is lack of discipline. A case of immorality that would be condemned by the low moral standards of Corinth itself, had brought no sense of remorse, nor action from the church. He demands immediate and drastic measures, first, for the salvation of the wicked man, and, secondly, for the salvation of the church, by casting out the leaven that would utterly spoil the temple of the Holy Spirit. Both can not dwell together in the church.

**4. Heathen Tribunals.**—The next evidence of carnality was found in the fact that they submitted their differences to heathen tribunals, instead of arbitration within the church. This teaching is clear and explicit, and applies to all times; disputes between saints should be settled by saints. Paul rebukes this custom upon the unfitness of unbelievers, and principally upon the ground that the principles by which they lived should ultimately "judge the world, or the world should be judged by them." God hasten the day!



**5. Personal Impurity.**—The last dereliction reported to Paul was that of the destruction of the temple of God, the church, by personal impurity. The apostle laid down the limits of Christian liberty, and declares that the believer joined to Jesus Christ "is one spirit" with Him, and all life's functions, powers and activities must be dominated by His Spirit. According to this position, all sin is rebellion against Him.

**6. Marriage.**—The apostle then takes up the questions concerning which they had written him. The first question is that of marriage. The conclusions are these: Marriage is honorable and right; when marriage union exists between a Christian and an unbeliever, the believer is not to take the initiative in its dissolution. If the unbeliever chooses to depart, the disciple is "not bound" to live with such a one, who might jeopardize his faith and happiness thereby. If, however, either would marry again, he must be reconciled to the other. They must deal with each other as the Lord's bondservant, that they might win and sanctify the other. In contracting marriage a Christian should marry only a Christian. In giving a virgin in marriage, the only rule is the highest realization of the fulfillment of Christ's purposes. If remaining single does this, then it is better not to marry.

**7. Things Offered to Idols.**—The next question is the attitude of Christians to things offered to idols. The general principle deduced is that out of love for Christ, and those for whom he died, one

should consider the weakness of others. The knowledge that an "idol is nothing" might puff a man up to defy an idol and all reverence for the same, but, "love edifieth," seeking to build up the weaker brother. Christian liberty is manifested in what he gives up for others. He illustrates this principle by his own action in surrendering his right to demand support of them. He further argues that the ultimate goal of every Christian is not only his own victory, but to "so run that ye may obtain the final purpose of Christ," and that all may be crowned. The eating of things offered to idols must be settled in the light of this purpose.

He further declares that privilege is not an assurance against failure. He refers to Israel, who were baptized into Moses, ate of spiritual food and drank of the same spiritual drink, yet, because of the four besetting sins of Corinth—idolatry, fornication, testing God and murmuring—they were overthrown and received not the promised inheritance. The same sins would destroy them. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," is his lesson to Christians in all ages. His teaching is summarized in these three propositions: the test of Christian action is right, then expediency, and the test of expediency is the building up of the church and our weaker brother. "Do all to the glory of God," and "give no occasion of stumbling."

**8. Women in Church.**—Bear these principles in mind in his dealing with the position of women in

the church. He would not silence women, because he prescribes how they shall adorn themselves when praying and speaking in a mixed assembly. He teaches that women bear the same relation to man that man does to Christ, and that man bears the same relation to Christ that Christ does to God. "Neither is without the other in the Lord." It may help us if we follow out these relationships. God is equal with Christ; he labors with Christ; yet he is the head of Christ. Christ made himself equal with man, and made man to labor with him in the church, yet he is head of man in the church. Now, to deduce his practical conclusion, man is equal with the woman in Christ Jesus, he is to co-operate with her in the work of the Lord, and yet he is her head in Christ. These Corinthian women, so recently delivered from domination of man to such liberty, were likely to abuse it, hence his caution to silence. She has a right to pray and prophesy, but always to recognize the headship of man. Both are needed for the work of the church. In his letter to Timothy later, Paul explains that woman is not to rule over the man, nor to deny herself the purpose and privilege God designed for her, to be the mother of preachers for the work of the public ministry.

**9. Abuses of Lord's Supper.**—In dealing with the abuses of the Lord's Supper, which was designed to be a communion with the body and blood of Christ, they had reduced it to the form and spirit of a heathen feast; thus again manifesting their carnality, in marked divisions, jealousies,

pride and shame. He reminds them of the humble and unpretentious circumstances of its institution, that it is a memorial, the neglect of which means spiritual death, the eating of which without discerning the Lord meant damnation. The cure for this is the recognition of the headship of Jesus Christ. Other disorders he promised to "set in order when he came."

**10. Spiritual Gifts.**—In regard to their question about spiritual gifts, Paul shows their carnality again in their abuse of them, and their contentions about precedence. These various gifts were given by the one Spirit for only one purpose, that of edifying the church. The Holy Spirit bestowed these gifts as he will, not according to their desires; the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the body, directs their service according to his sovereign will; and God the Father bestowed the power to do his will and overcome Satan and sin. These manifestations were to direct this young church and to prove that these imperfect men were messengers of God. Yet all these, without love, would profit nothing. Love, when these had ceased, will outdo them all in building up the church, until she come into the full likeness of her Lord.

Some one in the Corinthian church had denied the resurrection, presented the difficulties of a carnal mind, and asked, "How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?" To meet this, Paul gives that wonderful fifteenth chapter, which needs no comment, the conclusion of which is, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stead-

fast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

While the last of the Epistle is personal in character, it but emphasizes the theme of the whole Epistle, which is, the fellowship, work and reward of the church of Christ. The collection for the saints at Jerusalem emphasizes fellowship, the names of the saints manifest service, and the Lord in whose work they are engaged is proclaimed. Those who love him not are declared anathema. He prays for the grace of the Lord Jesus to be with them and keep them for their reward. His last message is of his personal love that had inspired him to labor for them.

## QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

### I. The City of Corinth.

1. What of its size and importance?
2. Where situated and what its commercial importance?
3. Give its history and political standing.
4. Give its religious and moral conditions.

### II. The Corinthian Church.

1. Describe Paul's arrival in Corinth.
2. Describe the beginning of the church.
3. Who composed the church?

### III. The First Epistle.

1. When and where written?
2. What was the occasion of its writing?
3. Was this his first letter to them?
4. What reports had reached Paul?

5. Upon what questions did they ask instruction?

#### **IV. Introduction to Study.**

1. What is Paul's fundamental thesis concerning the church?

2. How does he classify divisions in the Corinthian church?

3. What is the position of ministers in the church?

4. What the grounds of discipline, method and purpose?

5. What the base of all these disorders?

6. Give the conclusions on marriage.

7. What should be the Christian's attitude toward the weak?

8. What is the test of Christian action?

9. Discuss woman's place in the church.

10. What abuses of the Lord's Supper condemned? How partake?

11. Place, purpose and design of spiritual gifts?

12. How does the personal element emphasize the thesis of the Epistle?

#### **V. Analysis of 1 Corinthians.**

Read the book carefully by outline, and discuss Paul's teaching on the following topics:

1. God the Father.

2. The person, place and power of Jesus Christ.

3. The work of Christ.

4. The church, its message and mission and discipline.

5. Faith, upon what is it based?

6. Results of sin of impurity.



7. Significance of baptism.
8. Revelation and apostolic judgment.
9. The Holy Spirit and his work.
10. The natural, carnal and spiritual man.
11. The ministry and the minister.
12. The kingdom of God.
13. Marriage (*a*) with reference to conditions in Corinth (*b*) and now.
14. The Lord's Supper and heathen feasts.
15. Spiritual gifts: their source, purpose and relative importance.
16. The resurrection.
17. Love: its inward power; its manifestations; its permanence; its blessings.

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## LESSON VI.

### 2 CORINTHIANS

#### The Ministry of the Church of Christ

##### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Occasion.—Before Paul wrote either Epistle to the Corinthians, he had purposed to visit them on his way to Macedonia, and probably return *via* Corinth to Asia. They knew of his designs, and in the church's distress doubtless many were anxious for his coming. Some were not. He changed his mind when he learned, from reliable parties, of the apostate condition of the church, and determined to write his rebuke of conditions,



demand the church's withdrawal from the incestuous man, and urge reformation, in order that his coming might be in joy and not sorrow, both to him and them. He assures them that he will come, and urges them to have their gift ready for the saints in Judea.

Paul had been exceedingly anxious about the reception of his first letter, and had arranged for Timothy to follow up the message contained in the First Epistle (1 Cor. 16: 10), and had besought Apollos to visit them, in view of his popularity, no doubt (1 Cor. 16: 12). He had escaped a great danger in Asia (2 Cor. 1: 8-10), and had come to Troas, where he expected to meet Titus, who would tell him of the conditions in the church (2 Cor. 2: 12, 13). From Troas he went into Macedonia, where he met Titus with good news from Corinth (2 Cor. 2: 13; 7: 5-7, 13, 15; Acts 20: 1, 2). The result of the first letter was to produce the desired reformations, but stirred up much opposition (2 Cor. 2: 5-7; 7: 7-11). The Judaizers accused him of being fickle (1: 17, 18), of being proud and boastful (3: 1; 5: 12), of obscurity in his preaching (4: 3), of being contemptible in appearance (4: 7-10; 6: 4-10; 10: 10; 12: 7-10), of being rude in speech (11: 6), and afraid to say in person what he had written.

Paul writes his Second Epistle to congratulate the church on its position against evil; to urge the brethren to restore the incestuous man who had repented; to meet the calumnies of his accusers, and to urge the church to take a liberal offering

for the benevolent association (8: 16 *et seq.*; comp. 1 Cor. 16: 1-4). Like a true servant of Jesus Christ, he never lost sight of his true purpose under all the injustice of false accusers.

**2. Time.**—This letter was evidently written within a few months of the First Epistle (2 Cor. 7: 8, 9, 12). He is now among the Macedonian churches, headed for Corinth (2 Cor. 9: 1-5; 12: 14; 13: 1; comp. Acts 20: 2). Titus, who had brought the encouraging news of the improved conditions in the church of Corinth, returns with this letter of encouragement.

**3. Analysis.**—Natural divisions of the Epistle are three, apart from the salutation. He reviews recent events and does what he can to remove any bitterness caused by his positive stand against evil; he urges the collection, and vindicates his authority as an apostle.

## II. STUDY OF 2 CORINTHIANS

In the First Epistle, Paul had defended the church against its traducers, and incidentally refers to the ministry. In the Second Epistle, he writes concisely of the office of the ministry.

### 1. The Nature of the Office.

(1) Superior to ministry of old covenant (3: 2-11).

(2) Instituted of God (5: 18-20).

(3) Its office is to preach the gospel of reconciliation (5: 18, 19).

(4) The minister is qualified by God (3: 5, 6).

(5) His authority is from God (10: 8; 13: 10).

(6) Not lords over the church, but servants of Christ's people (1: 24; 4: 5).

(7) Such have the promise of God's blessing (3: 6).

(8) They are designated as

a. Ministers of Christ (11: 23; comp. 1 Cor. 4: 1).

b. Ministers of righteousness (11: 15).

c. Ministers of a new covenant (3: 6).

d. Stewards of the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4: 1).

e. Ambassadors of Christ (5: 20).

f. Ministers of God (6: 4), having the ministry of reconciliation (5: 18).

g. Differs from the apostolic office (11: 28; 12: 12; comp. 1 Cor. 9: 1; 12: 28, 29).

## **2. Characteristics of a Minister.**

(1) Drawn by love of Christ (5: 14).

(2) Themselves but earthen vessels (2: 17; 4: 7).

(3) Patient and willing to suffer for Christ's sake (6: 4; comp. 1 Cor. 4: 10-13).

(4) Not serving for money (12: 14; comp. 1 Cor. 9: 18).

(5) Not conceited (2: 17; 3: 5, 6).

(6) Not walking in craftiness (4: 2).

(7) Not easily discouraged (4: 8, 9; 6: 10).

(8) To avoid unnecessary offense (6: 3; comp. 1 Cor. 10: 32, 33).

(9) Must renounce hidden things of shame (4: 2).

(10) Must walk in holiness and sincerity (1: 12).

**3. What the Minister is to Preach.**

(1) Not themselves (4: 5; 3: 4, 5; 5: 12; 10: 12, 18).

(2) Not corrupting the word of God (2: 17; comp. 1 Cor. 1: 17; 9: 16).

(3) Not philosophy (1: 12; comp. 1 Cor. 2: 1, 4; 1: 23).

(4) Handle word of God honestly (4: 2).

(5) Preach the truth in sincerity (2: 17; comp. 4: 2).

(6) Commending themselves to consciences of men (5: 11).

(7) With plainness and boldness (3: 12; 7: 4).

(8) A positive, consistent message (1: 18, 19).

(9) A gospel of comfort (1: 4-6).

(10) A message unto edification (10: 8; 13: 10).

(11) Should be approved as ministers of God (6: 4).

(12) Message of comfort and joy in affliction (7: 4).

(13) His life should be an open book (7: 1-3).

**4. Attitude of the Church to Its Ministers.**

(1) Regard them as ministers of Christ (5: 20; comp. 1 Cor. 4: 1).

(2) Should pray for them (1: 11).

(3) Should support them (1 Cor. 9: 7-11, 13, 14).

(4) Follow their holy example (1 Cor. 11: 1).

(5) Should aid them in every worthy cause (9: 1-3; 8: 5).

If the student will add a few more incidental statements in 1 Corinthians, he will have a complete statement of the qualifications, duties and rewards of the ministry.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

#### I. Occasion.

1. What prompted the change in Paul's plans to visit Corinth?
2. What called forth the Second Epistle?
3. What charges did his enemies make against him?
4. When and where written?
5. Indicate the natural divisions.

#### II. A Study.

1. Note the difference in the theses of the two Epistles.
2. Give the points in the nature of the ministry.
3. How are they designated?
4. Give the characteristics of a true minister.
5. What is a minister not to preach?
6. What is to be his message?
7. How to commend himself?
8. What is to be the attitude of the church to its ministers?

#### III. Analysis of 2 Corinthians.

1. Name the main divisions.
2. Name the subjects enumerated under each.
3. Discuss the following subjects treated:  
(1) God the Father.

(2) The Holy Spirit: his function, power and authority.

(3) The person of Jesus Christ and his mediation.

(4) The word of God.

(5) Antithesis between the law and gospel.

(6) Methods and purpose of church discipline.

(7) Christians' duty to the poor.

(8) Christian liberality.

(9) Ability and accountability.

(10) Duties of Christians.

a. To God.

b. To the Christ.

c. To fellow-Christians.

d. To self.

e. To the world.

f. Christian's attitude toward sin.

g. Incentives to performance of Christian duties.

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## LESSON VII. GALATIANS

### Christ the Liberator

#### I. INTRODUCTION

**The Country and Its People.**—The name is used in two ways. Geographically it denotes the country occupied by the Celtic tribes in the central highlands of Asia Minor. The people were of Celtic origin, and possessed of all the characteristics of the Celts. "They came of a race that shook all

nations and established none." They were impulsive and hospitable. They received Paul as an angel from God and as quickly turned against him (Gal. 4: 13-16).

Politically it included Lycaonia, Isauria, and parts of Phrygia and Pisidia, which constituted the Roman province of Galatia. Luke in Acts, and Paul in his Epistles, seem to use the term in its geographical sense (Acts 13: 14; 14: 6; 16: 6; Gal. 1: 1).

A brief history will help us to understand Paul's presentation of Christ as liberator. The Galatians were descended from Gauls, who originally inhabited a large part of the country now known as France. In the fourth century before Christ they sacked the city of Rome, and in the third century before Christ they invaded northern Greece and Asia Minor. They were finally defeated and driven from Greece, but those in Asia were cut off and driven into the mountains, as their kindred were later in Wales and Scotland. They were oppressed on every side, too proud and independent to ever submit to servitude. Paul presents to them their liberator, Christ Jesus, the one for whom they had longed. Others were trying to force them into bondage under the law of Moses.

## II. THE CHURCHES

After the conference in Antioch (Acts 15: 35-16: 6) Paul starts on his second missionary journey. A great sickness overcomes him, and he likely seeks the uplands for recovery (Gal. 4: 11, 13). While



here on this second missionary tour, Paul preached to them and they received his message gladly (Acts 16: 1; Gal. 4: 14, 15). Their fickleness is indicated from the fact that he visits them again on his third journey for the strengthening of the disciples (Acts 18: 23). The names of the churches are nowhere mentioned (Gal. 1: 2), but at this time their principal cities were Taviu, Pessinus and Ancyra. Following Paul's custom of seeking important centers, we may infer that he had founded churches here. Luke tells us nothing of the apostle's labors in this region.

### III. WRITING OF THE EPISTLE

**1. The Occasion.**—The young churches at first did well, but soon the Judaizers found their way among them and taught that the Christians must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, in order to be saved. They claimed Jesus as their Messiah, but still looked for salvation through the works of the law. They refused to be bound by the decision of the conference in Jerusalem (Acts 15: 22-29). These teachers disputed Paul's apostolic authority, disputed his doctrine, and encouraged conduct contrary to Christian standards. The Galatians' faith was shaken and their salvation jeopardized.

**2. Paul's Defense.**—In most of his Epistles, Paul declares his apostleship, but in this introduction he defends that claim with more emphasis than in any other Epistle. With great care he makes his defense, both from the negative and positive side. There is no personal salutation or thanksgiving.

Instead of the usual "I thank my God for you," he said, "I marvel" at your fickleness. These false teachers had "no gospel." Paul considered this such a terrible thing that he twice pronounced a curse upon those who caused the trouble. In the first two chapters, he shows how he received his gospel by revelation of Christ, and vindicates his apostleship. In the third and fourth chapters he shows Christ's relation to the law; proves the superiority of the gospel over the law, and that justification is not through the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. In the last two chapters he shows that liberty is not license.

**3. Date.**—It is difficult to determine the time and place of writing this Epistle, or its chronological relation to the other Epistles in the polemical group. We know it was written after 54 A. D., the time of Paul's second visit (Acts 18: 23; Gal. 4: 13). It seems to have been written before Romans (58 A. D.). To this most critics agree. Galatians is the outline of Paul's defense against the Judaizers, while Romans is the development and fuller discussion. They were probably written about the same time. Some think it was written after 2 Corinthians, because of its resemblance to his vindication of his apostleship, and before Romans for reasons already stated. It is probable that it was written about 57 or 58 A. D.

#### IV. HIS GOSPEL

**1. Defended.**—In his defense Paul's argument falls into three parts: first, a statement of his

authority; second, that this authority was confirmed by conference; and, third, that this authority was sustained in his rebuke of Peter. He sustains the first point by three arguments drawn from his own experience. He had received his gospel not from men, but directly by revelation from the Lord. This he obeyed without consultation, and began at once to proclaim, "Jesus, that he is the Son of God" (Acts 9: 20). Then, secondly, the revelation of the Son of God in him, changing him from a persecuting Jew into an humble, loyal Christian; and, thirdly, that this change wrought in him caused the churches of Judea to glorify God because of His work through him.

In the argument from the confirmation of the Jerusalem conference, he said this was fourteen years after his conversion. Also in that conference the elders imparted nothing to him, but approved of his course and message. Upon this they gave him the right hand of fellowship. The question submitted to this conference was the very same pernicious doctrine that was being forced on them.

In the third point, he shows how Peter had confirmed his position by eating with the Gentile Christians, but, being overcome by prejudice or fear, he had withdrawn, and that he, Paul, was so confident of his position that he rebuked him to the face. He shows Peter's inconsistency in turning back to a law that could not justify, from which they had turned, putting their faith in Christ the liberator. He ended this argument with great words of personal testimony (2: 18-21), in which

he outlines the Christian life. Personal experience, in the light of the will and word of God, is the greatest testimony, after all. "Crucified with Christ," "It is no longer I that live." Thus believing, Paul had died to the law; also to sin. "Christ liveth in me;" "I live in faith which is in the Son of God:" believing this, I have identified myself with death and henceforth live unto God. If righteousness and a death to sin were possible under the law, which these false teachers are trying to force on you, "then Christ died for naught."

**2. Declared** (3:4).—Having thus defended his gospel, the apostle now proceeds to declare its essential truths. This he does in a threefold proclamation. He declares that justification is, and always has been, by faith; then he shows that the law was only transitional and transient, and then by contrasting the two covenants in allegory of Isaac and Ishmael.

In arguing for justification by faith, Paul appeals to the experience of the Galatians themselves, passing from his own experience. He tells how Christ was "set forth;" how they believed this story; how they received the Spirit by the hearing that produced faith; how this faith brought suffering; how the Spirit had been supplied, and how this faith had worked miracles among them. The law did none of these things. If they would be true sons of Abraham, it must be by faith.

"As many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." The law demanded perfection, but could not justify. Faith in the Son of God inspires

toward perfection and furnishes a new life and spirit. From this curse of the law, Christ, by his cross, delivers the true sons of Abraham. The cross becomes the basis of the faith that justifies. The covenant of faith was 430 years older than the law, which did not annul or fulfill this promise concerning the blessing of the world in Abraham's seed. The law simply exercised discipline, revealed the sinfulness of sin, and condemned sin in the flesh until Christ, the promised seed, was triumphant over sin, and created the foundation for faith and made it possible for all men to become the sons of Abraham, not under the law, but according to promise.

Under the law, the Jews were minors; under grace, God sent forth his Son to provide a way of redemption, and his Holy Spirit to produce regeneration, whereby those believing and trusting attain their majority. He here shows that this false doctrine is turning them back to the weak and beggarly elements of the world. He then reminds them, in the tenderest way, of their love for him, and contrasts his conduct with those who sought them "in no good way." They desired to shut the Galatians out that they might seek them and honor them. This is the proof of a false prophet. In contrast to this, Paul declares his anxiety for them to be that of a mother for her promised child.

In allegory, he then declares the Jews to be the children of the bondwoman and under bondage, and their relation to Abraham to be only according to the flesh, "but the Jerusalem that is above is

our mother, is free," and now "we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise." He further proves this truth by the nature of each. The one born after the flesh persecuted him that is born after the Spirit. He then calls upon the Galatians, in the spirit of Abraham, to cast out the Judaizers.

**3. Demands (5: 1-6: 10).**—In the last division of the Epistle, he sets forth the demands of the gospel. He demands for them freedom; then he shows that this freedom is for the rendering of a loving, loyal service, and finally he contends that freedom is not license; liberty is only found under certain limitations.

Their emancipation proclamation is in the first sentence. "Its privilege is described in the words, 'For freedom did Christ set you free,' and its responsibility in the positive 'Stand fast,' and the negative 'Be not entangled.' " He then more fully describes the snare of their deceivers, and contrasts the entanglements of the circumcision and the freedom of the saints. Though free from the law, they were demanded to refrain from the sins of the flesh condemned in the law. This they would do if they loved as they should. The Christian is the freest man in the world; he can do just what he pleases, but love prompts him to desire only that which is to edification.

The gospel demands that we walk by the Spirit, and the only way to tell whether we walk after the flesh or whether our lives are Spirit-filled is by the fruits of our lives. This is the rule Christ gave.



The gospel demanded humility and mutual helpfulness, and a positive proclamation of "the word," also that the Christian must be persistent in well-doing, and that special honor shall be bestowed on those of the household of faith.

## V. CONCLUSION

After a personal reference in which he calls their attention to the large letters which he had written, which was not his custom, Paul assails the motives from which these false teachers had acted. They desired to make a fair showing in the flesh, that they might escape persecution for the cross of Christ. If these people could bring the Gentile Christians to accept circumcision and keep the law of Moses, the most orthodox Jew would have hailed them gladly. In antithesis to this, Paul glories in the cross and the same loyalty to the truth that caused the crucifixion of his Master.

He prays for peace and mercy upon such as walk in the glory of the cross, and upon the "Israel of God." This is a fine stroke after combating a false effort to make them Israelites, and his proclamation that the true children of Abraham were those by faith.

Then, in the true spirit of liberty, he wrote: "Henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." The very things these Judaizers would sacrifice everything to escape, Paul proclaims as the signs of his office and his fellowship with his Master. These proclaim his independence of human opinions or



rewards. Then, a fitting benediction and the battle for Christian liberty is won.

## QUESTIONS ON GALATIANS

### Christ the Liberator

#### I. Introduction.

1. In what two ways is the name "Galatia" used?  
How used in the New Testament?

2. Who were the Galatians?
3. What of their history?
4. What were their tribal characteristics?

#### II. The Churches.

1. When did Paul visit them first?  
2. What of Paul's physical condition while there?

3. What is known of Paul's labors here?

#### III. Writing of the Epistle.

1. What was the occasion of writing this Epistle?

2. What is peculiar in the introduction to Galatians?

3. When was it written?

4. Where should it be placed among the "Law and Gospel" Epistles?

#### IV. His Gospel. (Compare Analysis.)

1. Name the main divisions of the body of the Epistle.

2. Give the arguments in defense of his gospel.
3. Enumerate the truths declared in his gospel.
4. What are the demands of the gospel?
5. How may we know those who walk by the Spirit?

**V. Conclusion.**

1. What is peculiar in the actual writing of this Epistle?
2. What motives impelled these false teachers?
3. What would have been the attitude of the Jews toward the church of the Gentiles if they had accepted circumcision?
4. What was the difference between Paul and the Judaizers toward persecution?

**VI. Analysis of Galatians.**

1. What is the theme of the entire Epistle?
2. What does Paul say of his apostleship in the introduction?
3. What was Paul's surprise, and why?
4. What is the gospel?
5. Whence did Paul receive his gospel?
6. Give an account of the conference referred to (Acts 15).
7. What bearing has 2: 11-21 on the claim for the primacy of Peter?
8. Give Paul's argument for justification by faith.
9. Give his contrasts between the law and gospel.
10. Give the differences between the two covenants.
11. Give the allegory and its meaning.
12. Is it possible to fall from grace?
13. For what are we set free?
14. Contrast love with lust and hate.
15. Contrast the works of the flesh and Spirit.
16. What does freedom imply? Show how this is so.

17. What should be the attitude of the church toward its teachers?

18. Give the contrast between Paul and false teachers.

19. Give the main divisions and main subdivisions of the Epistle.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

Read the Epistle carefully and note the points bearing on each topic.

1. Our Duties to God, Neighbor and Self.

2. Attributes of God.

3. God the Father.

4. Sin.

(1) Its universality.

(2) Its nature.

(3) Its results.

5. The Person of Christ.

(1) His humanity.

(2) His divinity.

(3) His resurrection.

6. The Mediatorial Work of Christ.

(1) His Messiahship.

(2) His Saviourhood.

(3) His sacrifice.

(4) His remedial service.

7. Holy Spirit.

(1) How received (3: 3, 5).

(2) Grace of the Holy Spirit (1: 6, 16; 2: 9, 21).

(3) The Holy Spirit the ruling principle of the new life (5: 16, 18, 25; 4: 6).

## 8. The Calling.

- (1) Called of the Father (5: 8).
- (2) In the grace of Christ (1: 6).
- (3) Through the preaching of the gospel (1: 6-8; 2: 2).
- (4) Through the preaching of faith (2: 23; 3: 2, 5).
- (5) For freedom (5: 13).

## 9. Regeneration.

- (1) The unregenerate require a new creation (6: 15).
- (2) Implanting a new life (2: 20).
- (3) Work of God, by Holy Spirit, through the Word (3: 2).

## 10. Conversion.

- (1) A change of the whole past life (1: 13, 14, 24).
- (2) A turning from the rudiments of the world (4: 3, 9).
- (3) It is a walking by the Spirit (5: 16-18, 25).

## 11. Faith.

- (1) Necessary to salvation (3: 21, 22, 26).
- (2) Elements of faith.
  - a. A knowledge of the things to be believed (4: 9; 3: 23; 2: 2).
  - b. Assent to the truth (1: 6, 8, 11, 12; 2: 14).
  - c. Confidence and trust in Christ (2: 16; 3: 26).
- (3) God and Christ the ground of faith, hence personal (1: 16; 3: 6; 1: 11, 12).
- (4) The gospel to be believed (1: 6, 8, 11, 12).
- (5) Believers only saved (2: 16; 3: 22).
- (6) Justified by faith in Christ (2: 16; 3: 24).

- (7) Sons of the promise by faith (3: 7, 9, 14).
- (8) Receive the gift of Holy Spirit through faith (3: 2, 6, 14).
- (9) Faith operates.
  - a. Receptively (3: 14, 22; 2: 16).
  - b. Operative faith, manifested in works of love (5: 6, 14, 22; 6: 10).
- (10) Proofs of faith (5: 13, 16-18, 22-25; 6: 4, 9, 10).
- 12. Justification.
  - (1) Only two ways of being justified, either to be perfect or to be forgiven (3: 6-14; 2: 21).
  - (2) It is God who justifies (3: 6, 8, 11).
  - (3) Justification consists of two things.
    - a. Remission of sins (1: 4; 3: 13, 22).
    - b. Imputation of Christ's righteousness (2: 21; 3: 27).
  - (4) A man is not justified by works of the law (2: 16, 21; 3: 11, 21; 5: 4).
  - (5) Justified by faith in Christ (2: 16, 21; 3: 24).
  - (6) Gentiles included (3: 8, 14).
  - (7) Effects of justification.
    - a. A dying to the world (6: 14).
    - b. Crucifying of the flesh (2: 20; 5: 24).
    - c. Freedom from domination of sin (5: 13, 17).
    - d. Union with God (2: 20; 3: 27, 28).
    - e. Sonship and heirship according to promise (3: 8-14, 18, 21, 22, 26, 29; 4: 4-7).
    - f. Peace (1: 3; 5: 22; 6: 16).
    - g. Freedom from the bondage of the law (2: 4; 3: 25; 4: 31; 5: 1, 13).

h. Imputed for righteousness (2: 21; 3: 6; 5: 5).

i. A living faith (2: 20).

j. Walking by the Spirit (5: 16, 25).

k. Fruits of the Spirit (5: 22, 23; 6: 2, 5, 6).

13. Paul's teaching concerning the law and gospel.

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## **PART III. TRANSITIONAL EPISTLE**

### **LESSON VIII. PHILIPPIANS.**

#### **The Mind of Christ the Secret of Joy**

Paul's letter to the Philippians differs from all other of his writings, in that it lacks a definite scheme of teaching, and also that there is no rebuke nor harsh correction of evils contained therein. It has been termed his love-letter. From this we infer that this church most nearly approached the apostolic ideal in life and service. The word "sin" is not mentioned. The flesh is only mentioned that it may be ignored. It is largely personal and joyous, growing out of their remembrance of him and his love for them. It was written by one who loved to those who loved him. It is filled with expressions of joy by one who had learned that happiness is not incident to externalities. The doctrine of the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ was introduced for a hortatory purpose. Some of the sublimest things concerning

Christ and Christian living are here written. The real epic of Christianity is found in the second chapter (2: 5-11).

## I. THE CITY AND THE CHURCH OF PHILIPPI

**1. Philippi.**—The city of Philippi played a large part in the destiny of the world. It originally belonged to Thrace, but in 358 B. C. it was seized by Philip, king of Macedon—the father of Alexander the Great—and made the eastern fortress of his kingdom. It was here (42 B. C.) that the republican forces of Rome, under Brutus and Cassius, were defeated by Octavius and Marcus Antonius, and Augustus (Octavius) was made emperor of Rome. Here the political liberties of the people died. Because of this victory of absolutism, the city was made a Roman colony. Here Paul, with his three companions, invaded Europe and began the conquest which shall end in universal liberty and peace. Here was established the first Christian church in Europe.

**2. Holy Spirit's Part.**—The church came into being by the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who prevented Paul from turning aside either into Bithynia or Asia, and guided the apostle and his company on the second missionary journey to Troas. Here Luke, who was a Greek, met and doubtless recounted the possibilities of European conquest. In answer to the vision of the man from Macedonia, Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke “made a straight course to Samothrace, Neapolis and from thence to Philippi.” It was the first city of importance of



this district. Paul always selected strategic centers for his work.

When the Jews had no synagogue, they met beside a running stream to worship. Jewish influence was not strong, and evidently only a few lived here. On the Sabbath Paul and his companions went forth without the gate by the riverside, and here spake to the devout women. Lydia, a merchant-woman, heard, and God opened her heart to believe. She was the first to be baptized into Christ, she and her household. Opposition came not from the Jews, but from men who were deprived of their gain by the freeing of a slavegirl from "a spirit of divination." The apostle and Silas were beaten and cast into prison, which furnished the opportunity of "preaching the word of the Lord" to the jailer and all that were in his house. In their belief, repentance and baptism, there was added to the church its first Gentile constituency. The jailer and his house rejoiced greatly in their new-found faith. Paul here stood on his rights as a Roman citizen in demanding a public release, but this evidently suggested to his enemies the charge of treason, which they preferred against him at Thessalonica, declaring that this Roman said, "There is another king, Jesus" (Acts 16: 11-40; 17: 7). Persecution only deepened the love between Paul and this noble church; they had fellowship with him time and again by giving to his support in preaching the gospel to others.

## II. THE EPISTLE

**1. Time and Place of Writing.**—This Epistle was written from Rome during Paul's imprisonment (Acts 28: 30, 31; Phil. 1: 7-13; 4: 22), about five years after the writing of the "Law and Gospel" Epistles, A. D. 62. The occasion was the sending of a gift to the apostle by the hand of Epaphroditus. Here he entered heartily into the work of the Lord, had taken violently ill and was nigh unto death. Upon his recovery Paul sent him back to them with this letter of rejoicing (2: 25-30; 4: 10-19).

### **2. The Contents.**

(1) **Bishops and Deacons.**—In the introduction Paul graciously associates with himself Timothy, his beloved son in the gospel. Paul declares him to be the noblest and most unselfish of all his helpers. In this letter, for the first time, the officers of the church, "bishops and deacons," are mentioned. These, according to the New Testament, are two orders of servants of the church. The bishops, or overseers, are entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the saints; while the deacons were to look after the needy and attend to the business details of the congregation. These are not mentioned first, since they have their importance only as they serve the interests of the church.

(2) **His Joy.**—In writing to this liberal church, he first expresses his own personal joy and the joy of expectation. On remembrance of them his joy and thankfulness find expression in prayer. His desire for them was that they might prove

the things that are excellent, that they might be sincere and void of offense unto the day of Christ.

(3) **His Bonds.**—He then turns to his experience in prison and thrice, in rapid succession, speaks of "my bonds," and yet rejoices that these "have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel." He sees now that to have gone to Rome as a prisoner has given him opportunities he never could have had as a free man. He rejoices that Christ was preached even by those who would add to his affliction in bonds. He has evidently had his hearing, and rejoices in the privilege of testifying for his Lord before the emperor of the world. The case is in his hands, and Paul is simply awaiting the decision, but he is confident of acquittal. However it may be, he is assured that "Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." From his own viewpoint, death would be far better, but to live would give him the joyful opportunity of seeing them again and of supplying their needs. Here he gives the secret of that life which in joy could rise above all persecution and injustice of men, in the sublime passage: "For to me to live is Christ, to die is gain."

(4) **His Master Passion.**—His love for the Philippians is expressed in a hortatory expression: "Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ." "Be not afrighted by the adversary, because it has been granted unto you, in behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer in his behalf." In order to render

this acceptable service he exhorts them "to be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Do nothing through faction or vainglory, "but all to the glory of God." In this they would fill his joy full, to overflowing. This he declares to be the source of their joy and exaltation. ' This mind of unselfish love and service is illustrated by the Lord Jesus, who, being equal with God, counted it not a thing to cling to, but voluntarily emptied himself; gave up heaven and its bliss to share the lot of a man; being found as a man, he humbled himself to become a servant; being a servant, he became obedient unto death; being appointed to die, he chose the death of the cross, the death of the vilest. "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name." The way of the world's progress is by way of the cross; the line of honor is humility and loving service. The Master passion is that of love, first, as the motive of self-emptying; and, secondly, as the reason for divine favor. The manner of life which is worthy of the gospel must be directed by the mind of Christ. The effect of such lives is that they will be seen as lights in the world. He declares in conclusion, that if these ideals be fulfilled there will be great glorying in the day of Christ, and everlasting joy, even though this life be poured out as an oblation.

He then illustrates this principle in his commendations of Timothy and Epaphroditus. Timothy is proclaimed as one who seeks not his own, while Epaphroditus is spoken of as "your mes-

senger, and a minister to my need." He is now sending him back to help them.

(5) **His Warning.**—The mind of Christ implies not only self-abnegation, but rejoicing. Having stated the duty and illustrated it, the apostle proceeds to warn them against the peril that threatens their joy, that of conforming to heartless ceremonies, for he declares "we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God." He warns against worldly pride of position, birth or nationality. All should gladly be counted as refuse, that we may gain Christ and be found in him. It is not enough to be found in him, for in this life we have not attained perfection, but "to press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus." Forgetting the things that are behind, they, as Paul, were to press on toward the goal unto the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus. "Our citizenship is in heaven," and there shall we attain to the honor and glory of his likeness.

The last division of the Epistle is occupied with a second exhortation, which follows naturally upon the other. Not only should the mind of Christ, his suffering and service, be in the Christian, but these who were his "joy and crown" were urged to "stand fast in the Lord." Not only is each to look to his own standing, but to help others. This is illustrated in the case of Euodia and Syntyche. There had been some difference between them, and because of this trouble they had been neglected by others in the church. They are not to be cast off

because of this, but, remembering their past service, the church was to aid them.

Here Paul widens the exhortation, but, with this case still in mind, directs the church in all cases of discipline. Differences are to be dealt with by remembering the good, rejoicing, forbearing, remembering "the Lord is at hand," and prayer, and the results will be that the peace of God will guard the heart and thought.

Instead of remembering these differences and multiplying each other's faults, they were exhorted to think on the things that are true, honorable, just, pure, lovely and of good report. If there be any virtue and praise, emphasize these and the breach will be healed. This course would heal the schisms of the church to-day and fill it with joy and victory.

(6) **His Source of Supply.**—Then, applying his own rule, Paul remembers their excellences and their service on his behalf, and rejoices in the same. This expression of rejoicing calls forth a statement of the deepest experience of his life. While he rejoiced in this expression of love, he was not dependent upon such for his happiness. He is able to be content in any circumstance, because he abode with Christ, who strengthened him. Again he thanks them, not because the gift enriched him, but because it meant "fruit that increaseth to your account," and said unto them, as He has cared for me, "My God shall fulfil every need of yours according to his riches of glory in Christ Jesus." Then comes the doxology.





## QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does Paul's Epistle to the Philippians differ from all others?

### I. City and Church.

1. What is the central thought?

2. Give a brief history of the city of Philippi.

Where located?

3. What decisive events transpired here?

4. What was the relation of this church to European Christianity?

5. Give the incidents of its founding.

6. Who were its first members?

7. Give an account of the conversion of each?

8. Who were Paul's companions and colaborers?

9. Why did they suppose there was a place of worship by the river?

10. What trouble later grew out of Paul's claim of Roman citizenship?

### II. The Epistle.

1. Give the time and place of writing.

2. By whom was it sent?

3. What officers of the church mentioned? What their duties?

4. Show how Paul's bonds had fallen out to the furtherance of the gospel.

5. What is the supreme exhortation of the Epistle.

6. What privileges were granted these Christians?

7. Show the steps in Christ's humiliation.

8. What is the line of progress and exaltation?

9. What dangers threatened their joy and salvation?

10. How are differences between Christians to be dealt with?

### III. Analysis.

1. Give the main divisions of the Epistle.

2. Give the principal subdivisions of each.

3. Repeat the most notable passage.

4. What great doctrines proclaimed?

5. Give his exposition of true righteousness and perfection.

6. What is the end to be attained?

7. How are Christians to live worthy of the gospel?

8. What evidences of Paul's success in Rome are given?

9. What right had Paul to boast in the flesh?

10. How did he regard these things?

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## PART IV. THE CHRISTOLOGICAL EPISTLES

### LESSON IX. EPHESIANS

#### The Church, the Body of Christ

##### INTRODUCTION

In passing from the "Law and Gospel" Epistles to those of the imprisonment, properly called "The afternoon Epistles," we are conscious of entering a different atmosphere. The first are heated with con-

troversy; the latter are reflective. In the first, Christ occupies an historical place; in the latter, a cosmical. The kingdom he creates and governs is not limited by the nature we know (Col. 1: 16; 2: 11; Eph. 4: 10). The kingdom is God's (Eph. 5: 5), so when sin and rebellion entered the universe, the Creator, who is good, had no choice but to become its Saviour—Satan and sin must be overcome. This can only be done with good. Man was created for this purpose. God designed from before the foundation of the world to accomplish through humanity, in whom dwells the spirit of his Son, what the angels of heaven could not do. Sin is a thing of Satan, opposed to God and deadly to man (Eph. 2: 1; Col. 1: 21, 22). Before evil became imminent in man it had a being. It existed with an organized kingdom and king, whose spirit was opposed to God, which now worketh in the sons of disobedience (Eph. 2: 2; 6: 12). The antithesis in the later Epistles is not between the flesh and the spirit, Adam and Christ, but between the Son of God and his conquering hosts, and the "prince of the power of the air" (Col. 1: 13; 2: 15; Eph. 6: 11), the kingdoms of darkness and of light. Thus salvation is the work of the Son of God, as creation had been (Col. 1: 20; 2: 14, 15).

The incarnation was an event in time, but the fulfillment of an eternal purpose (Eph. 1: 4-14). This is an idea in the mind of God from eternity. Its occurrence in time was for us (Eph. 1: 10; Phil. 3: 21; 2: 9-11). In his body of flesh, by his death on the cross, the Son of God's love wins and

reconciles alienated man to God (Col. 1: 21-23). Thus he makes new creatures after the image of God, builds a new society and imparts to it his own life and spirit; rules it by love, fills it with peace, and marks it by great unities which are the signs of his presence (Eph. 4: 5, 6). His presence assures final victory. Satan is powerful, but only God and Christ are *all-powerful*. A united and vital body, directed alone by Christ, its head, is as sure to overcome Satan, sin and death as did the risen Lord. Therefore we are exhorted to put on the whole armor of God, and fighting with him, both in offensive and defensive warfare, share in the victory.

The victory is not alone in the hereafter, but in the present life. The ethical note of these later Epistles is the conception of the "new man" in Christ Jesus, whose sins were slain by his death and who shares his risen life. This "new man" is the type and beginning of a new humanity, in whom dwelleth righteousness. The temper and disposition of the believer, his conduct in all social affairs, and practical duties, are expressed in the "life hid with Christ in God."

Ephesians and Colossians are companion Epistles—the complement and explanation of each other. Both treat of "Christ and the church." The emphasis of Ephesians falls on the church as the body of Christ. Colossians puts the emphasis on the Christ as the head of the church. The doctrines of the person of Christ and nature of the church are developed side by side. Colossians is a letter

of discussion; Ephesians, of reflection. The difference in treatment lies here.

### THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST

This letter may be understood as a statement of the church's present and eternal vocation. In it Paul does not deal with the fundamental doctrines of salvation, as he does in Romans; nor with the church's organization for present service and the ministry of the gospel, as he does in the Corinthian letters, but with the church's conception as existing in the mind of God, and her vital relations to her Christ. This treatise is not alone doctrinal, but intensely practical. The last half of the Epistle shows how an understanding of this heavenly calling affects the present life.

This is the greatest treatise on Christian union ever written. It is God's eternal purpose to unite man to himself in Christ Jesus; to unite the church in Christ, uniting both Jews and Gentiles, male and female in him; to unite all the individual members in one body, his church, whose personal relationship to the Christ is as vital and essential as the hand to the head; to unite the loyal subjects of God, "both which are in heaven and which are on earth," under Christ's authority, until all are subject to him. This union is spiritual and not mechanical; holy, pure and Christ-filled, therefore sin is excluded. It is sin that separated man from God and separates man from man; only its removal can reunite the church and bring man into communion with God.



## I. THE CITY AND THE CHURCH

1. *The City.*—Next to Rome, Ephesus was the most important city visited by the apostle Paul. It was settled by colonists from Athens, whose thought and sentiment here mingled with Asiatic races made it cosmopolitan in spirit. It was a great commercial, political and religious center.

It was noted especially for idolatry and pleasure-seeking. The temple of Diana, which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, was located here. It stood outside the city wall and faced toward the east. It was built of marble. Its dimensions were 164 by 234 feet, and the time spent in building was 220 years. A huge image of the goddess, within a "dazzling shrine," was placed in the center of the temple. Here people from all the inhabitable earth came to worship (Acts 19: 24-41). The theater, which was hewn from the western slope of Mt. Coresus, seated fifty thousand spectators. Here beasts fought with beasts and with men for the amusement of the populace (Acts 19: 29; 15: 32).

2. *Paul's Visits to Ephesus.*—The apostle first came to the city when returning from his second missionary journey. He brought with him Aquila and Priscilla, whom he left there, doubtless with the purpose of providing a home and helpers when he returned. His stay was not long, but, reasoning in the synagogue, he made a favorable impression and was urged to remain. Having taken a vow which must be fulfilled at Jerusalem, he promised



to return (Acts 18: 18-21). During his absence Apollos visited Ephesus and passed on to Corinth (18: 24-19: 1).

On his third missionary journey Paul again stopped at Ephesus, and abode three years (Acts 20: 31). This was the high tide of Paul's life. The gospel message spread through all Asia, "so mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed." Here God bestowed upon him special power (Acts 19: 11, 12). The opposition here was multifold; Jews of the synagogue, sons of Sceva, magicians, idolators and commercial interests combined against him; yet, above it all, the "name of the Lord Jesus was magnified" (Acts 18: 24-19: 4). The Ephesian church was the center of many congregations throughout the province of Asia.

## II. THE EPISTLE

**1. The Place and Time of Writing.**—It was written during Paul's Roman imprisonment, in which time he lived in his own hired house, and enjoyed many privileges. People came to him "in great numbers," to whom he expounded the law of Moses and the prophets, testifying the kingdom of God (Acts 28: 16-31). Among his visitors were messengers from distant churches, including Tychicus from Ephesus and Epaphras from Colosse. It was by the hand of the former that this letter was sent to "the saints and faithful," that they might know his state and that their hearts might be comforted (Eph. 6: 22).

It is likely that this Epistle was not sent to the

church at Ephesus alone, but to the group of churches of which Ephesus was the center. Their interests had been vitally bound together from the beginning. This position is sustained by the fact that the words "at Ephesus" are not in two of the older manuscripts; the Vatican and Sinaiticus. The fact that there is no salutation or directly personal references in the Epistle seems to lend force to the conclusion that it was intended for a group of churches. The Epistle is general in character and lacks local coloring, which confirms the opinion that it was intended for the church as a whole. Being deprived of the privilege of visiting the churches and confirming the brethren, this Epistle was written for that purpose.

2. *The Contents of the Epistle.*—Paul introduces himself as usual, claiming to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, through the will of God, doubtless bearing in his mind the heavenly vision which qualified him to testify of a risen Lord. He then defines those to whom he wrote, "the saints;" that is, to those faithful in Christ Jesus. No better definition of saint was ever given. He salutes his readers with an expressed wish that they might have grace and peace, which comes from none other but "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." They need not be sought elsewhere.

The church is the fulfillment of the eternal purpose of God, is Paul's first proposition. He begins with thanksgiving to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us every spiritual blessing *in Christ*. "In the heavenly" can always

be supplied with the word "church." "*In the heavenly*" and "*in Christ*" are the keys to this passage. Every spiritual blessing is "*in the heavenly church, in Christ.*" The question of predestination has troubled many, because discussed as a question of philosophy rather than a revelation. Paul says that redemption was not an afterthought with God, but before the foundation of the world He decided upon the *purpose, methods* and *results* to be accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord, and his heavenly church. He "*chose us in him,*" to be "*holy and without blemish,*" *before him,* having foreordained us *in love* unto adoption as sons *in Christ*. According to Paul, it was not God's will, but God's love, that determined our sonship. Before man ever sinned, God purposed to choose us, that we should be holy and blameless *in Christ*, and foreordained us unto adoption *in him*. Before the foundation of the world, he determined the method of our redemption *through his blood*, the forgiveness of our sins and the riches of his grace, and the revelation of the mystery of his will *in Christ*. Indeed, in the fullness of time God summed up all things in heaven and upon earth *in Christ*. Lest we should do what we have done for centuries, forget that all God's blessings, wisdom and love are in Christ, Paul said, "*In him, I say.*" The predestined result of all this is that we are God's heritage *in Christ*, unto the praise of *his glory*; that we should have hope *in Christ*, receive the word of truth *in him*, believe *in him*, be sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise *in him*, and

have our inheritance *in him*, and all this unto the redemption of God's own possession (the church) unto the praise of *his glory*. 'If all this is determined of God for those *in Christ Jesus*, then how do we come into such possession is the pertinent question Paul answers in Gal. 3: 26, 27. "For ye are all sons of God, through faith *in Christ Jesus*. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

With the assurance of their 'faith in the Lord Jesus and their love manifested toward all the saints, Paul bursts into a prayer of thanksgiving and prays that they may have a full knowledge of the purpose of God and the power at their disposal for its realization.

Passing, then, to the subject of the building up of the church in love, he first speaks of the changed lives of these who were dead through trespasses and sins. Guarding them lest any should think he merited salvation, he declares that they were created for good works. Nothing will edify the church so much as transformed lives and the good works of God's children. Thus, "in Christ Jesus" God brings, out of the deepest degradation, the material with which he will build his church. Paul then passes to the unification of the material into one building. Jews and Gentiles were united in Christ, thus making a "holy temple in the Lord," for "a habitation of God in the Spirit." The temple at Jerusalem was but a type of this.

Passing, then, to the vocation of the church, the apostle shows that God's dwelling in this temple,

the church, is not a finality, but an endowment for the fulfillment of her purpose in bringing sons and daughters into the kingdom. The church is the medium through which God is to manifest his manifold wisdom and love. Here the apostle falls on his face again in prayer, and asks of God "that they may be filled unto all the fulness of God." That this might be accomplished, he prays that they may be rooted and grounded in love and thus be able to lay hold of the fullness of God. That they may have this love, he prays that Christ might dwell in their hearts. That this may be so, he prays that they may be strengthened with power through the Holy Spirit. Then follows the great doxology: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever." So wonderful is the task to be accomplished that only God himself can accomplish it, for "it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure."

**The Earthly Vocation.**—Paul at once passes to the practical application of this great doctrine, and exhorts them to help God in fulfilling this prayer. They can walk worthily of their calling only by being lowly, meek, longsuffering and forbearing in love; this is the duty of each individual. The first responsibility of the church is to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

This exhortation is enforced by the three funda-

mental unities which reach from the church on earth to the throne and being of God in heaven. There is one body, and that body is the church. Hence there is but one church and one body, because there is one Spirit. It is the church of Christ only so far as it manifests this one Spirit and is inspired by the one hope.

If one Spirit dwells in us, it is one Lord who reigns over us. If we have one hope to work for, it is because we have one faith to live by. A common purpose implies a common creed. One baptism indicates the authority of one Lord, and this baptism sets forth the facts of his death and resurrection by which he produces death to sin in us and a risen life with him. The name of the one Lord rebukes party strife and division in his church. It recalls the indifferent to his task as a member of his body. "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, . . . and were all made to drink of one Spirit." In this recognition of the lordship of Christ is the ultimate ground of union for all men.

The last of the unities is the greatest. The fellowship in the one body of the one Spirit, and the confession of the one Lord and, by faith, obedience to his authority in one baptism, brings us to the adoption of sons of the one God and Father of all, who is over the one body, through the one Lord Christ, and in all his children.

As the three divine personalities are one in purpose and effort for the building up of the church, and the salvation of the world, so the various ministries of man in the church are for the same pur-



pose. These ministries are a gift of Christ, the one Lord, and to him alone the individual exercising them must answer. All working together is for the ultimate union and perfection of the body of Christ.

Turning now to the matter of individual conduct, he illustrates the difference between the old life and the new by eight remarkable contrasts. He exhorts believers to put off the old and to put on the new. Two definite commands stand out above all others. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, by whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption," and, "Be ye filled with the Holy Spirit," that you may edify the church in its worship.

He then approaches the family, which is idealized in Christ. The husband is head of the family as Christ is head of the church. "The wife is to be subject to the love of the husband, finding her joy in the fulfillment of the natural capacities of the love of woman, in trusting so perfectly in the loved one as to rejoice in his guidance." The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, His bride, and to seek only her good. This is restoring God's original designs. Paul declares in this union the "mystery of Christ and his church." In the story of creation man was not made from the woman, but the woman from the man; man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man, and together they were to people the earth and have dominion over it. So Christ was not made from the church, but the church from the Christ; Christ was not made for the church, but



the church for the Christ, that together they might fill the earth with the children of God and have dominion over it. Obedience is the base of all development and blessing; hence children are commanded to obey, and parents not to provoke them to anger and rebellion; servants are to obey, remembering that their reward is from Christ, and the master is not to forget that his own Master is in heaven, and to him he must answer at last.

This brings us to the closing paragraph. The apostle realizes that such a life as he has set forth will bring a Christian into conflict with all the forces of darkness and all that opposes God. Perfect provision is made for the soldier of Christ who faces the enemy. There is no protection for his back. The armor must be "taken up" and "put on;" and the soldier must fight, but victory is assured. Satan is pushing and will push the conflict even into "the heavenly." The conflict is on between the divine Son of God and the supreme enemy of God and all that is good; but there can be only one ending; that is, that Satan and sin must be destroyed. Therefore Christians are urged to put on the whole armor of God and fight with him under the leadership of the victorious Christ, with the full assurance of victory, glory and honor. Paul realized the truth of Christ's last great prayer for his disciples (John 17), that a divided church can never win the world from the power of Satan, but that a united church can take the world for Him.

In conclusion, Paul reminds them that his con-

flict had made him an "ambassador in chains." Yet "peace, love and faith" was his, and he could petition nothing greater for them. These can be supplied, not by the world or Satan, but only by the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. His grace is only to those who love.

## QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

### Christological Epistles.

1. What are the characteristic differences between the "Law and Gospel" and Christological Epistles?

2. Give the doctrine of the Incarnation.

3. The purpose of the Incarnation.

4. What is the keynote of Paul's ethical teaching?

5. Show the relation between Ephesians and Colossians.

### Ephesians.

1. What is the theme in this Epistle?

2. Mark its differences as compared with Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians.

3. Name the points in Paul's discussion of Christian union.

### I. The City and the Church.

1. Describe the city of Ephesus.

2. Give a brief history of the city.

3. For what was it noted?

4. Give an account of Paul's labors here as recorded in Acts.

### II. The Epistle.

1. Give the place and time of writing.

2. By whom was this Epistle sent and to whom?
3. Give the reasons for believing this to be a general Epistle.
4. What authority does Paul state for his apostleship?
5. What is his definition of "saints"?
6. Was the church and the plan of salvation an afterthought with God?
7. What are the keywords in the Epistle?
8. How do we become the sons of God *in Christ*?
9. What is Paul's petition for them?
10. What means does he mention for building up the church?
11. What is God's relation to the church?
12. Give the great doxology.
13. Outline the earthly vocation of the church.
14. How does he enforce this exhortation to walk worthily?
15. What is the purpose of all the ministries in the church?
16. Give the principles of individual conduct.
17. Give the principles of family life.
18. How does the ideal Christian family reveal the mystery of Christ and his church?
19. Describe the Christian armor and conflict.
20. Give the conclusion of the whole matter.
21. Give the predestined purpose, method and result of God for us "*in Christ*."

(Study the analysis and questions in scholars' book.)

## LESSON X. COLOSSIANS

### The Glorious Christ, the Head of His Church

In each of Paul's great Epistles there is one salient thought. In Thessalonians it is the coming of Christ and his reward. In Corinthians it is the church of Christ, the medium of his ministration. In Romans it is justification by faith in Christ. In Galatians it is Christ the liberator. In Philippians it is the mind of Christ, the secret of joy. In Ephesians it is the church, the body of Christ. In Colossians it is Christ, the Head of his church. What a glorious ending for the doctrinal Epistles of the apostle to us Gentiles!

The Christ whom the world needs is not merely the perfect man, nor the heroic sufferer, nor the teacher of a practical philosophy or ethics, but a divine Christ of power as well; the source of creation and its Lord and Sustainer, who from the beginning has been the source of the life of all that have lived, and before the foundation of the world was in the bosom of the Father. Such is the Christ of Paul as presented in this Epistle.

#### I. THE CITY AND THE CHURCH

The city of Colosse was located on the Lycus River, a small stream emptying into the Mæander. It was about twelve miles above the important

cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, where there were Christian churches. One of these gained the bad distinction of having a tepid religion. In the earlier times Colosse had gained considerable prominence, but declined from the time of Cyrus, until, in the time of Paul, it was an insignificant, decaying town; a place of minor activities where people have time for useless discussions and idle speculations.

Paul was not the founder of the church, for more than once he speaks of having "heard" of their faith and love; and declares his strivings for them and "as many as have not seen my face in the flesh" (2: 1). It is probable that Epaphras established the church here during the time of the great religious movement incident to Paul's labors in Ephesus (1: 7).

Epaphras came to consult the apostle Paul concerning two dangerous doctrines that were disturbing the church. One was inspired by Jewish ceremonialists, to whom religion was a matter of ritual; the other, by Oriental speculators, to whom the world was filled with matter and forces which left no place for the personal presence of Christ in the affairs of men and the progress of the world. The fundamental thesis of the latter is that matter is evil and the seat of evil, and hence is antagonistic to God and Christ. The conclusion must then be that God has nothing to do with its creation or government, and hence to be holy one must withdraw from the world. If matter be the source of all evil, rather than man's will, then faith, which

implants a new life, is ineffectual; only ascetic mortification of the flesh can make men holy. Epaphras, struggling to build up the church under such conditions, was like erecting the cross between a Talmudic rabbi and a Buddhist priest. Mediation was not of the "man Christ Jesus," but of angels and demons who were freed from the flesh.

## II. THE EPISTLE

1. **Place and Occasion of Writing.**—This letter was written in Rome during Paul's imprisonment, and about the same time as the Ephesian letter. The occasion was the report of conditions in this little country church by Epaphras. The apostle combats the principal errors, by declaring the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Christ, the Head of the church. In it he declared the fullness of God in Christ Jesus and the church's fellowship in the same.

## III. CONTENTS OF COLOSSIANS

After the usual salutation, which is almost identical with that of the Ephesian Epistle, Paul uses the tactful method of the successful disciplinarian of approving that which was good before correcting that which is evil; of the Christian, in manifesting first his joy. The reasons for his thankfulness were their "faith in Christ Jesus," their "love . . . toward all the saints," and their "hope . . . laid . . . in heaven." There is a sequence established by the apostle; faith in Christ is manifested in love for the saints, and this love expressed is the ground



of hope. In so far as the Christian apprehends all for which he has been apprehended by Christ Jesus, faith is constant and love is manifested in service.

**1. The Pre-eminence of Christ.**—The apostle introduces this division of the Epistle by declaring his constancy in prayer for them and then records his prayer for them. The supreme burden of his heart was that they might "be filled with the knowledge of his will;" thus qualifying them "to walk worthily of the Lord" and "to bear fruit in every good work." Then he remembers the unworthiness of man and the grace of God, and urges that they might be "thankful unto the Father, who had made them worthy to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." The keywords in this petition are "delivered," "translated," "forgiveness." They were delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love, where love and light rule instead of darkness and death. In this kingdom they were forgiven and made worthy to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints.

All this prepares for his statements concerning the glorious Christ. He dealt with the glories of his person and his relation to God, the Father. "He is the image of the invisible God." All that we attribute to God is manifested in him. His relation to the material universe, which they were being taught to despise, is that of creator and sustainer, upholding all things by his power. He is holding all things together for his own divine purposes. He is prior to all created things, and their master.

He it is who sets the bounds of nations, thrones and powers. When these get out of line with his purposes, they fail. In his relation to the church he is its Head by reason of his victory over death. God has made him pre-eminent of all divine forces in heaven and on earth, until all enemies be put under his feet. He is to direct the church as the head directs the body. "It is the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell." His relation to the redeemed is that they might be reconciled to God through the blood of his cross, and restored to fellowship with the divine. "All things are from the Father unto us, through him, and we unto the Father, through him." This reconciliation is only possible to lives that are transformed through his death; lives that are "holy . . . without blemish" and "unreprovable."

This gloriously transformed company constitutes the church of Christ, which is his body, and stands in the same relationship to his work of the world's redemption. Christ's suffering alone is not sufficient to reconcile the world unto God. Jesus never gave an invitation to men that did not involve service, sacrifice and suffering. Paul rejoiced in his suffering for them because it filled up his part of the suffering which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ. Christ does not ask his disciples to suffer alone. Paul learned this lesson on his way to Damascus. His church must agonize for the redemption of men. This is the first mystery concerning the church, which had been hidden for

ages; the way of progress is by the way of the cross. The second mystery is in relation to the individual Christian, "which is Christ in you"—"I live, not I, but Christ liveth in me." The third mystery is that of Christ himself; the mystery of the incarnation, transcending all finite apprehension and yet manifested in the changed lives of those who believe in him and is finally to be revealed in the whole triumphant church of Christ. The Colossians were seeking mysteries of heathen vagaries. Here are mysteries: the mystery of God in Christ; the mystery of Christ in man; the mystery of a perfected and victorious church, the Christ-filled body, when redeemed humanity shall have overcome Satan, a thing the angels could not do. His reasons for this careful and profound statement are given in the closing paragraph: that the "faithful" may not be deluded with persuasive speech, and that they might add to his joy by their steadfastness.

**2. Submission of the Church to Its Head.**—The apostle introduces this section by an exhortation, a warning and the statement of a basic truth. The movement from the statement of the Trinity of mysteries to the declaration of the relation of the church with Christ, is most natural. The church is made complete in him. All authority and power are in him. Cleansing is alone in him, and we get into him by obedience of baptism. Having buried the old dead man with him in baptism, we are raised with him, having been made alive with him. The law only condemned, but they were freed from

the ritual of the law by his cross, and forgiven in him because he triumphed in his cross over all human and Satanic "principalities and powers," and made a demonstration of them openly. All spiritual blessings are secured only "in him."

Paul then calls attention to the dangers threatening the church at Colosse, which had been told him by Epaphras. He frees them from heartless ritual and wild speculations and intercession of angels, and binds them to the "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." The apostle then proceeds to show how the risen Christ is united with his disciples in all the relationships of life. There must be a corresponding putting to death of the things of the earth; of these he gives two lists. One deals with the lower passions, which he classes with idolatry; the other is of the passions of mind and spirit. They belong to the old man of sin, and bring the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. He then urges them to put on the "new man," which grows into the likeness of the Christ, who is "in all." "He is all" because they are but members of his body. This can be done only as they let the peace of Christ and the word of Christ dwell in them. He then gives the comprehensive rule of Christian conduct: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." This is the rule alike for conduct and worship.

He then applies this principle to domestic relations, including husbands and wives, parents and

children, masters and servants. The intimacy is shown in Christ as Head of the Christian household. This division closes with three vital injunctions. The first is prayer for him and them, which connects the life with God, the source of power. The second is the "walk" of saints concerning self. The third is in regard to speech, affecting others primarily. The reason for all is to redeem the times and manifest the mystery of God revealed in the church. This is really the conclusion of the whole matter.

The final word is concerning the disposition of this Epistle and one he had written to Laodicea; and to commend his fellow-workers, three of whom were Jews and three Gentiles. He then takes the pen from his amanuensis and subscribes his own name, and writes the words, "Grace be with you."

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the fundamental difference between Colossians and Ephesians?

2. Give the thesis of each of the great doctrinal Epistles concerning Christ.

3. What kind of a Christ does the world need as described in Colossians?

#### **1. The City and the Church.**

1. Where is Colosse?

2. Give its history and condition at time of writing.

3. What grounds for believing Paul did not found the church?

4. What was the occasion of writing the Epistle?

5. What two heresies, or combination of heresies, threatened the church?

6. How does Paul combat these errors?

## II. Contents of Colossians.

(Study analysis and Epistles in connection with comment.)

1. Show Paul's tact in approaching his rebuke of error.

2. What were the grounds of his thankfulness and their sequence?

3. What was his introductory prayer for them?

4. Where are forgiveness and inheritance found?

5. Give Paul's statements of the glorious Christ.

6. Give the laws of reconciliation.

7. What is the relation of the church to Christ's work?

8. What evidence that Christ's suffering is not alone sufficient for the world's redemption?

9. Give the three great mysteries revealed.

10. Discuss the doctrine of the incarnation.

11. Upon what does Paul base his teaching of the submission of the church to its Head?

12. Discuss the doctrine of mediation between God and man.

13. What is the base of Christian ethics?

14. Name the two lists of passions condemned.

15. What is the comprehensive rule of Christian conduct?

16. Give the principles of domestic life.

17. Give the supreme purpose of all.

18. Enumerate the graces needed by those in Christ.



## PART V. THE PASTORAL AND PERSONAL EPISTLES

This group of Epistles from the apostle Paul, which we have termed "Pastoral and Personal Epistles," differs from others in several particulars. First, they are addressed to individuals rather than to congregations of Christians, yet they are written to them, not simply on personal matters, but on matters in which they were concerned as ministers of the church, and because of their relationship to others, growing out of their relationship to Christ. Hence they are official rather than private letters, and contain vital instruction for the church of Christ in all ages.

In 1 Timothy and Titus the pastoral element prevails; in 2 Timothy and Philemon, the personal. In recent times these Epistles have been denied the apostle Paul, principally upon four assumed premises: (1) The difficulty of finding a place for all but Philemon in the life of Paul, as given in Acts. (2) Some peculiar phraseology not found in the other Epistles. (3) That the church organization described is of later date than Paul's time. (4) That the doctrines attacked sprang up after the apostolic age. All of which propositions have failed of substantiation. The evidence of their Pauline authorship is full and positive, and reaches back to the earliest times. They were placed in the canon not without careful consideration, since they had been

challenged by Marcion, not on critical grounds, but because they contained things that did not suit his theory of the gospel.

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## **LESSON XI. PASTORAL EPISTLES**

### **1 Timothy and Titus**

Paul's custom was to gather about him younger persons who filled out the measure of his ministry, and to whom he was a guide and inspiration. There were about thirty of these mentioned in the New Testament. Choicest among these were Timothy and Titus.

#### **I. THE TIME OF WRITING**

It is now generally believed that Paul was freed from his first imprisonment, an account of which is given in Acts 28: 16-31, closing with Paul still a suppliant for justice at the court of Cæsar, but with the privilege of preaching the kingdom of God (Acts 28: 30). We believe that his continuous longing to preach the gospel unto Spain (Rom. 15: 24) was granted him of the Lord. It was during the time of his release that the first letters to Timothy and Titus were written. These Epistles give us only a glimpse of the movements of the apostle. His release was fully expected by him (Phil. 2: 24; Philem. 1: 22), and his judgment was inerrant. Upon his release from prison he goes to Ephesus; leaving Timothy there, he departed for Macedonia

(1 Tim. 1: 3). From some place in Macedonia or Greece he sailed for Crete, where he left Titus, intending to spend the winter in Nicopolis (Tit. 1: 5; 3: 12). In 2 Timothy Paul is again at Rome; he speaks of having been at Corinth and Miletus (2 Tim. 4: 20). From the way he speaks of leaving his cloak and books at Troas (2 Tim. 4: 13), it is believed that he was arrested here and hurried back to his second imprisonment and death.

## II. TIMOTHY; PAUL'S CHILD IN FAITH

This disciple of Paul was a native of the province of Lycaonia, most probably of the city of Lystra (Acts 16: 1). His father was a Greek and his mother a Jewess. From the way Paul speaks of Eunice and Lois, they seem to have been old acquaintances, and that their unfeigned faith had been known to the apostle before Timothy's conversion. From the fact that Lystra is not far from Tarsus, it has been conjectured that these women had been taught by Paul during the early days of his ministry, before Barnabas sought him out and brought him to Antioch (Acts 11: 25, 26; comp. 9: 26-30). Timothy was taught to believe in the Christ of the Scriptures from a child (2 Tim. 3: 15). The first recorded visit of Paul to Lystra ended in his stoning, when he seemed to be dead (Acts 14: 19). On the morrow he went with Barnabas to Derbe, but soon returned to confirm the disciples (Acts 14: 20-22). It was doubtless on this visit that Timothy was led to accept the Christ. Paul speaks of him as his son in the faith (1 Tim.

1: 2), and on his second visit to Lystra Timothy is a disciple "well reported of by the brethren" (Acts 16: 2). It was doubtless at this time that he was ordained to do the work of an evangelist (1 Tim. 4: 14; 2 Tim. 1: 6; 4: 15). From this second missionary visit he was almost constantly with the apostle until the time of his martyrdom. Here is a friendship between an old man and a young man, which is more beautiful than the friendship of David and Jonathan. In this case each is the real complement of the other. Paul leans on him, while he guides him; and in distress relies upon his thoughtfulness, firmness, delicacy, tact and unselfish service to the church, which is "the pillar and ground of the truth." Because of this, Paul esteemed him most highly and sent him on several important missions, and associates him with himself in writing several of the Epistles (Acts 17: 14; 18: 5; 1 Thess. 1: 1; 1 Cor. 4: 17; 16: 10; 2 Cor. 1: 1; Rom. 16: 21; Acts 20: 4; Col. 1: 1; Philem. 1: 1; Phil. 1: 1).

It was while Timothy was in charge of the church in Ephesus that Paul sent to him these Epistles, which contained the instruction necessary to fit him for his work in perfecting the church.

### III. CONTENTS: OFFICERS, QUALIFICATIONS AND DUTIES

In the introduction of both Epistles, the salutation reveals the two prevailing elements—authority and paternal love. No man has ever accomplished great things for God and humanity who has not

possessed the "father-heart." In order to proper government of the church, there must be duly recognized agents of Christ's authority. Here he states that his commend is of "God our Saviour, and Jesus Christ, our hope." Paul's greeting to Timothy included the salutation to the Greeks, "Grace" to you; of the Christian ideal, "Mercy;" and the Jewish "Peace be unto you." The truest love is revealed in the designation, "My true son in faith."

**Christ's Minister and His Message.**—To be successful, any minister must understand the problems to be solved, the difficulties to be met, and the work to be done. It was necessary to understand the different doctrines which Timothy was to counteract. There are various expressions in both Epistles to his "child in faith" which seem to point to two elements in the false teaching which threatened the liberty and life of the church. The error is Jewish in origin and gnostic in nature. Its promoters "desire to be teachers of the law" (1: 7); "they are of the circumcision" (Tit. 1: 10). It is gnostic in nature as shown by "opposition of *gnosis*," which is so called (6: 20), and "fables" and "questionings," rather than the stewardship of God, which is in faith (1: 4). These doctrines are recognized in the Colossian Epistle, which shows that they were gaining a dangerous hold on the minds of the Christians of Asia Minor. This Jewish opposition had now passed to the third stage through which every antagonism to a successful movement passes. First, it was violent in form and manifested in per-

secution; second, it was indifferent and tried to ignore the new teaching; third, it entered the church and tried to make it Jewish by forcing the law of Moses upon Christians, sinking into "profane babblings," pretended revelations of the "genealogies of angels" and absurd ascetic rules supposed to promote holiness, while the grossest immoralities marked their actual conduct (1: 4-10).

In opposition to this, Paul declares the "sound doctrine of the gospel of the glory of the blessed God" (1: 11). He gives his own personal experience as an illustration of its glorious power, and declares "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and ends in a glorious song of praise and resultant obligation to Christ's service.

Timothy is charged to "war the good warfare," which means much more than to "fight the good fight of faith." These words imply an extended campaign, and place the responsibility of a commanding general upon Timothy, who is now in charge of the forces of Christ in Ephesus. He is to be strengthened for this conflict by remembering the prophecies concerning him, and by "holding faith in a good conscience." The apostle enforces his charge by a warning in which he reminds him of two who, because of failure, had been "delivered unto Satan."

The church is not only to war against false teaching and immorality, but it is to intercede with God for man, through the "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." This intercession is described by the words "supplications,



prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings." He then declares that only "the pure in heart can stand before God;" that men and women, to be acceptable at the throne of grace, must be clean in life and strong in character. He then again, as in Corinthians, declares that man is head of the woman, and that her supremest mission is to be the mother of the race, the shaper of its destinies as such, not the ruler of the church.

To war this warfare and to properly intercede with God for man, the church must have other officers than evangelists and to recognize the true purpose of her existence. In dealing with government of the church, Paul describes two orders of servants, "bishops and deacons." These have no authority in themselves, only as directed by Christ, who is their Master. He describes his own authority as an "apostle and servant" of Jesus Christ, and declares that the man seeking "the office of a bishop desireth a *good work*," while the word "deacon" itself means "a servant." The work of each is indicated in the names applied; a bishop is an "overseer" of the forces of righteousness, looking after their spiritual needs, directing their lives, protecting them from false teachers, and edifying the same by teaching and example. This work is conditioned on two things; the character of the man and the will of the church. The diaconate is primarily to look after the temporal wants of the church. It is not inferior, but different; complementary and co-operative with the eldership. They are to provide the means for carrying on the war-

fare, to look after the needy and to provide for the poor. It is the commissary and hospital department of the church militant. In this ministration, women and their blessed influence were not overlooked. If a church has no men qualified for such service, it had better defer their selection until such time as it may, by the grace of God, develop the same. Paul indicates this by saying that he should not be a "novice" and "let the deacon *also first* be proved." The "also" implies that the elders, or bishops, were understood to prove their efficiency by service. Let them do the work incident to their office, and when the church is sure of their fitness, and that they will promote the interests of the kingdom of God, then she may set them apart to this glorious service.

This leads to the final declaration of the first division, which is a wonderful description of the church and its mission. It is God's house in which he dwells. It is "the pillar and ground of the truth," upholding all that is true in the sight of men. This brings him naturally to the next division, which is a declaration of that truth which the church upholds and reveals; in the doctrine of godliness, as proclaimed by its evangelists, and in the purity of his life in his conduct toward the men, women, widows and officers in the church.

He then, and throughout this personal instruction, speaks of the duties of each of these classes as members of the household of God, including servants; and as a final lesson, he speaks again, the third time, of false teachers; their man-

ner and method; their present object and final end of the same. In contrast with this, he describes the manner of life of the "man of God;" declares, in the form of a charge, that his object in this life is to keep the commandments without spot or reproach until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall fully reveal his authority, blessing and glory, and shall give unto the faithful immortality.

In his instruction to the rich in this world's goods, he declares that opportunity involves responsibility, and that they are but the stewards of God, which should be the cause of humility rather than of pride. If properly used, they may "lay hold on eternal life, which is life indeed," and for that life may build their own possession.

Realizing the urgency of the case, the crisis of the church, and the power and subtlety of the opposition, the apostle again repeats his charge to Timothy, and closes with a prayer for the grace of God to be with his servant.

#### IV. TITUS

Little is known of this important man's life. He became the person whose case Paul made a test for the freedom of the gospel to the Gentiles, without circumcision. It was because of his presence in Jerusalem, along with Trophimus, that Paul was seized by the Jews and came near unto his death (Gal. 2: 1-5; 2 Cor. 2: 12, 13). He was the messenger by whom Paul sent the First and Second Epistles to the Corinthians. He was left in Crete to complete the organization of the church and to

refute the doctrines of false teachers. It was while here that Paul sent him the Epistle that bears his name (Tit. 1: 5). He instructs him on the qualifications of elders, his attitude toward heretical teachers and the points to be emphasized in his teaching of the church. His sojourn in Crete was to be brief, since Paul urges him to join him at Nicopolis (Tit. 3: 12).

The origin of the church in Crete is conjectural; probably resulting from the preaching of the converts on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2: 11). The corrupting doctrines of Judaizers and the natural perversity of the Cretans (Tit. 1: 12) were responsible for the disorder which disturbed the church. This also gave direction to Paul's Epistle. Paul had implicit confidence in him. And the curtain falls on him at Dalmatia (2 Tim. 4: 10). That the church had been established in Crete for some years before Paul wrote this letter is sustained by three things. First, Titus is charged to appoint elders, "city by city," and that no city is to be left without an overseer. Second, that men were nurtured under Christian teaching to possess the necessary qualifications for elders; this, of course, would be reduced by Jewish training in the synagogue. Third, the fact that a formal propagation of heresies in the church was carried on, indicates that the churches were of considerable age.

## V. CONTENTS: THE CHURCH'S MINISTRY

Paul describes himself in this introduction as a bondservant (slave) of God and an ambassador of

Jesus Christ. His only authority is in Christ; his only duty to serve God, his Master. He here gives the fullest vindication of his apostleship. It is in the faith of God's elect; in knowledge of the truth; in hope of eternal life; in the promises of God, long ages ago, and this by a revelation of the risen Lord whom he was to proclaim, according to the commandment of God our Saviour. His salutation to Titus as his "true child after a common faith" implies the same source of his ministry and the same conditions of service. Again, he declares the only source of grace and peace is in God the Father and Jesus Christ our Saviour.

The chief business of Titus in Crete was to set the church in order and appoint elders "city by city." Hence the apostle discusses the true form of church government under the heading of officers, their duty and character. The office of an elder is identical with that of "a bishop," as described in Timothy. The requirements as to character are the same, except that he classified them in this case into those relating to his family, his own life and to his teaching. In all he must be "blameless." The function of an elder is here described as a steward, which suggests oversight and management of the church, which is the household of God. This is more fully emphasized by the fact that he is a teacher, to bring forth good things, both new and old, from the storehouse of God's treasure, for the sustenance of God's servants and children. The work of the elder, therefore, is not to legislate and dominate, but to interpret the will of God as re-



vealed in Christ, the Head of the church, and to urge men to obey him. Only men of "blameless" lives can so represent a "blameless" Lord.

Paul either has more confidence in the courage and judgment of Titus than of Timothy, or the task was not so difficult, because this Epistle lacks the urgency of his letter to the latter. The immediate work of Titus in Crete was to meet and neutralize the influence of Judaizing teachers, who were pursuing their present course for filthy lucre. He was to rebuke them openly, and hence the severity of Paul's message. The weakness of their doctrine and their influence was, as is usual with those emphasizing ritualistic and philosophical tenets, in their lives of license and lust. Hence the apostle urges through Titus the "sound doctrine" of a Christ-filled life, "which can not be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of us." He instructed Timothy in regard to the preacher's attitude toward old men and women, young women and men, but in the instruction to Titus the instruction is given to them.

The means of grace by which this transformation is to be wrought out hath appeared unto all men in Christ Jesus. Following this out, he declares that the means of this grace is by revelation, instruction and the hope of reward at the final revelation of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. For this very purpose Jesus Christ gave himself for us. It is not alone for our eternal redemption, but "that he might purify unto himself



a people for his own possession, zealous of good works." He then outlines the work of the preacher in three words, "speak," "exhort," "reprove," but his authority is to be sustained by a blameless life. "Let no man despise thee" is even more important than the admonition to speak.

This naturally leads to the attitude of the church toward the pagan world; should it despise them because of its own superior position? Not so, but they should be law-abiding and encourage every good work and show a Christlike spirit toward all men. He then credits the transformation of the lives of Christians to the washings of regeneration and the "renewing of the Holy Spirit which is poured out upon us richly through Christ Jesus our Saviour." Thus the glory is not of man, but to the divine agency alone, by which man is able to overcome. Thus, by justification of grace, we are worthy to become the heirs of eternal life.

The question then arises concerning the practical realization of so ideal a state and reward. This is to be accomplished first by "being careful to maintain honest occupations;" by shunning foolish questionings and genealogies and unprofitable and vain occupations, and by a firm but kind discipline of any man who insists on precipitating such upon them.

In the conclusion, he refers to some personal matters, defends the support of the minister by the church, and then sums up the conduct of Christians in this word, "Let our brethren also learn to maintain honest occupation, for necessary wants,

that they be not unfruitful," and then follows his usual salutation and benediction.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. In what does this group of Epistles differ from other Pauline Epistles?

2. Upon what grounds has their Pauline authorship been denied?

3. Show the weakness of such assumptions.

4. What natural division in this group?

#### I. Time of Writing.

1. Give the arguments for Paul's release from first imprisonment.

2. Where was Paul when he wrote Second Timothy?

#### II. Timothy: Paul's Child in the Faith.

1. Give an account of his early life and Paul's acquaintance with his family.

2. Give an account of Paul's labors at his home city.

3. How does he rank among Paul's fellow-servants?

4. Give a brief outline of his work as known.

5. Where was Timothy and what his task when Paul wrote him?

6. What called forth this Epistle?

#### III. Contents and Analysis.

(To be studied in connection with analysis and text.)

1. What two elements prevail in these letters?

2. Show the scope of his salutation.

3. What two elements marked the false teaching Timothy had to meet?

4. Compare this with conditions at Colosse.

5. Show the natural stages of every opposition to a successful cause.

6. In what is the weakness of every such movement shown?

7. Show how Paul meets such opposition as illustrated in his own experience.

8. What is to be the nature of this conflict?

9. What is to be the source of Timothy's strength?

10. Discuss the doctrine of mediation between God and man.

11. Discuss the relation of man and woman in Christ Jesus.

12. What is woman's supremest mission?

13. Give the qualifications of "bishops or elders."

14. Give the qualifications of "deacons" and deaconesses.

15. Describe the work of each.

16. What impresses the carefulness of their selection?

17. How does Paul describe the church and its mission?

18. Describe the apostasy.

19. Set over against this the doctrine of godliness.

20. Give the rules of conduct of an evangelist toward members of the church.

21. What should be his attitude toward false teachers?

22. What his instruction concerning the rich?
23. Give Paul's summary at the close of Epistle.
24. Contrast the impelling motives of false teachers and the true.

#### IV. Titus.

1. What do you know of Titus?
2. Why should Paul circumcise Timothy and refuse to circumcise Titus?
3. Where was he and what his work when Paul wrote to him?
4. What do we know of the church in Crete?

#### V. Contents of Titus.

1. Give Paul's vindication of his apostleship.
2. What is his relationship to that of Titus, to God and Christ?
3. What are the qualifications of elders?
4. What is the purpose of his appointment?
5. Give the duties and functions of the eldership.
6. What of his character?
7. What called forth such instructions?
8. What was the character of the Cretans?
9. Give the duties of a true minister.
10. Give the laws of conduct for various classes in church.
11. Name the means of grace.
12. Give Paul's charge to an evangelist.
13. Describe a Christian's attitude toward the world.
14. Discuss the doctrines of regeneration and justification.
15. What is the method of their realization?

## LESSON XII.

### Personal Epistles: Philemon and 2 Timothy

#### CHRIST AND PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP

Though the personality of Paul is manifested in all his Epistles, which are not formal treatises, but practical applications of the doctrines of Christ to life, yet there are none so intensely personal as this group.

#### I. PHILEMON: CHRIST AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

In this personal letter, Paul does not assume his apostolic authority, but speaks by the assurance of love, as a Christian to a Christian brother. Its right to a place in the canon was questioned in the fourth century, on the ground that its contents were beneath the dignity and spirit of the apostle. Indeed, the whole range of human life would not be covered by revelation, if this Epistle were left out. The whole subject of friendship and social relations is illumined by the application of Christian principles.

1. The time of writing and conditions are the same as that of the Epistle to the Colossians (Col. 4: 9). The persons mentioned are Philemon, a child of Paul's in the gospel (1: 19), and a well-known and influential Christian (1: 2). Apphia is

supposed to have been the wife of Philemon, and Archippus the minister of the church. Onesimus was slave of Philemon, who had committed some wrong and had fled from his master and sought refuge in Rome. Here he had evidently, in his distress, sought the aged apostle whom he knew. In his bonds he made Onesimus a free man. They had been mutually helpful to each other. Since repentance requires restitution, Paul insisted that he return unto his master, and writes this letter to prepare the master's heart for his reception as a "brother beloved."

Slavery was at its height and in its worst estate. The slave, though he may have been a man of the same race, of superior culture and character, had no rights of his own. A slave had recently been killed for the amusement of a patrician's friends. Shortly before Paul arrived in Rome, Pedanius Secundus, a senator and prefect of the city, was slain by an outraged slave, and, according to law, all his slaves, numbering four hundred, were put to death.

**2. Emancipation Proclamation.**—This short personal Epistle is the Emancipation Proclamation of Christ, issued by his prime minister, "Paul the aged." Nothing can be more certain than that Christianity is, and always has been, opposed to slavery, on its fundamental principle of a common brotherhood. It links every soul to Christ, the Master of all, and thus gives life a divine sacredness. There are two ways of bringing about any reformation: one is by force which is worldly, the



other is by imparting a new spirit and new ideals which must eventually express themselves in outward life. This is the Christian method applied by Paul in announcing the brotherhood of man, the fatherhood of God, the sonship of Christ, and his vital relationship to every believer. Paul set himself to correct the life of the slave and to raise his self-respect, worthy of the confidence and love of his master, who should recognize in him a "brother beloved." If the life of the humblest man is precious enough to call forth the suffering and death of Christ, then it is above price and removed from the slave-market forever. The slaves of the world have been freed on this principle. The other lesson of the Epistle we are yet to learn, that they are partners in all the blessings of the gospel.

**3. Contents.**—While the letter is addressed to Philemon, Paul includes the members of his household and the whole church in the salutation. The reason for this is evident. Upon this new relationship in Christ Jesus, Paul is about to base his appeal on behalf of the former slave. He salutes them with his usual salutation of "grace and peace."

Paul wisely approaches his request by two steps: the expression of his appreciation of Philemon and the argument of the heart and love. It is to be carefully noted that his love and faith were described as being "toward the Lord Jesus and toward all the saints." Then he prays that Philemon's faith may become effectual in the knowledge of every good thing, even unto the fullness of

Christ. Then the apostle declares his own joy and comfort in Philemon's love to all the saints, and in this calls him his "brother." He reminds Philemon that he owes everything to him, and that he had the right to enjoin him to do the thing that was fitting. Yet he would rather beseech him, for love's sake, that his "goodness might not be of necessity," but to his credit. Very effectually he appeals to his imagination and honor by speaking of himself as "Paul the aged and now a prisoner of Jesus Christ." It was for my service to such as you that I am now in chains, he seems to say. I begat you "through the word" as a free man, and now I beseech you for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds. Then, and not until then, does he name "Onesimus." Then, to reinforce tenderness with humor, which is always helpful in bringing one to decision, Paul makes a pun on the name "Onesimus," which in the Greek means "helpful." He was once not what his name indicates, but "now is profitable both to thee and me." I am sending him back, but my heart goes with him. He is a converted man, and who knows but God's hand was in it all, that you might have him forever, no longer as a slave, but now as your own brother? You lost a slave and found a brother. His last appeal was on the ground of partnership, in which he urges Philemon to receive the penitent slave as God had received him, and as he would receive Paul himself, a free man. To emphasize this partnership, Paul promises to aid Onesimus in manifesting his penitence by paying any amount

in which he had wronged his master, for Paul was now his debtor. The concluding request is crowned with joy.

Even the conclusion enforces the request, because he assures Philemon of his coming, and asks him to prepare him lodging. Should he refuse such a tender appeal, the presence of Paul, his partner, his brother, his beloved, his fellow-worker, the one to whom Philemon owed his hope of heaven, would not have been joyous. But with Onesimus now "helpful" to them both, and restored to all his rights, there would be joy unspeakable.

## II. 2 TIMOTHY: CHRIST AND CRISES

This Second Epistle to Timothy was written from prison in Rome and sent to Timothy in Ephesus. The troubles in the church were the same as those mentioned in the First Epistle; the message to Timothy was in the same spirit, except more intensified. The situation has become more critical. Paul is conscious of his own approaching death. He recognizes the danger in the Ephesian church, and foresees the great apostasy. He sees two sources of danger for Timothy, one a physical collapse, or under the grave responsibility he might lack strength of soul. In the light of the first two facts, Paul writes of Timothy's responsibility; responsibility of the minister; the responsibility of the church, and, finally, responsibility toward the truth. His final word is a justification of his own ministry.

1. **Second Imprisonment.**—There are several

things in this Epistle that confirm the theory of the second imprisonment. In the "afternoon Epistles" of the first imprisonment, Paul was confident of his release (Philem. 1: 22; Phil. 1: 19, 25). In this he knows that the time of his departure is at hand. Paul has just passed through a terrible storm in Asia, which has swept him on to Rome. He appealed for help, but "all that are in Asia turned away" (1: 15). Some of the names used are of persons in Asia, and have a local significance in connection with this persecution. He was probably arrested at Troas and unkindly hurried away without his cloak and books (4: 13), and he speaks of his "first defense" (4: 16). This storm is sure to break upon Timothy, if it is not already raging, because he is laboring under the same circumstances that caused Paul's arrest. Hence his anxiety, and this letter filled with heart-pulses and stained with tears.

**2. Contents: Jesus Christ Sufficient for Every Crisis.**—Even the introductory salutation is influenced by Paul's approaching death. In this there are two phrases different from those in the First Epistle. He here speaks of his apostleship as being "according to the promise of the life which is in Christ Jesus." Its fullest realization for him is now at hand. It is also appropriate to strengthen Timothy in the loss of his dearest friend, and for his own life's struggle, which may also end with a martyr's crown. Before he speaks of Timothy as his "true child," now he makes him the object of his love and calls him his "beloved

child." He declares again that the source of "grace, mercy and peace" is God the Father, and Jesus Christ our Lord.

Forgetting himself for awhile, he addresses Timothy concerning his responsibility, first, in view of the gifts of God bestowed, and then as to the grace which is sufficient for every need. He urges this "beloved child" to "stir up the gift," which reference indicates Timothy's discouragement, and not to be ashamed of the testimony of Christ. The gift was that bestowed by the laying on of the apostle's hands in consecrating him to the work of an evangelist. It was characterized by power (perhaps to work miracles), by love and discipline. This responsibility is enforced by a declaration of the greatness of the gospel and the salvation which was given us in Christ Jesus long ages ago, and by Paul's own experience and conception of the importance of the ministry. He urges Timothy to "remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead." He bases everything upon the resurrection. Because of this he had been able to endure "all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." He urges Timothy to continually remind the disciples of these things, that they may also be faithful. Here, again, he emphasizes the work of the ministry in handling aright the word of truth, and shows that those who fail are those who have forsaken the same.

The second line of argument is enforced by the injunction, "Be strengthened in the grace that is



in Christ Jesus," and "Suffer hardship . . . as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." This is illustrated by the soldier who is faithful to his king, the athlete who contends according to the rules of the game, and the husbandman who labors and is partaker of the fruit of his toil. In each case the reward is kept continually in view. The reward is both now and hereafter. Again, he urges the young preacher to "remember Jesus Christ," and declares that while the messenger may be bound, the "word of God is not bound." "If we die with him, we shall also live with him; if we endure, we shall reign with him," and again he declares that failure is only to the faithless. Now for the final test, to one pressed unto death for the testimony of the gospel, "If we deny him, he will also deny us."

The next paragraph deals with the work of the church. Their inspiration and courage are produced in the same way. Here are described two classes—the faithful and faithless. The worker is contrasted with the destroyer. Here Paul again urges Timothy to exercise his gifts in the spirit of love, especially in exercising his power of discipline. In order to do this, he must forget self, follow truth and avoid all questions which gender strife. He then proceeds to describe the awful apostasy which is to be the result of the spirit that was then opposing the truth. This which was seen by the apostle shall become "evident to all men," and then the truth shall triumph and in that glory all the faithful shall partake.



Then the apostle turns to the "solidarity of the truth" and the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures as the "sword of the Spirit." One word indicates the evangelist's personal responsibility; it is "abide." Their purpose, as given of God, is "that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work."

His final charge is concerning his ministry. The incentives are those of the final Judgment, in the presence of God and Christ Jesus; the perils of the time, and the needs of men. No greater motives could be presented. His work as an evangelist is stated in four significant words, "preach, reprove, rebuke, exhort," and do not be anxious for visible results. These are exactly the functions ascribed to the Scriptures. There is one other important point, not so clearly brought out; that the preacher will be able to preach the Word effectually in the measure in which he is established in character and life by the same; "be sober," "suffer hardship," "work," "fulfil thy ministry." This is all the more urgent because Paul is to exchange the cross for the crown. He is no longer to lead the forces of a world-wide, soul-free, Christ-centered gospel, and this is his last will and testament, bequeathing to Timothy the richest treasure ever contained in earthen vessel.

In the conclusion, he remembers his friends and warns Timothy against his enemies. He makes provision for his few remaining days, and urges this child of his love in the gospel to come unto him quickly. Reviewing the past, he realized that

the Lord had saved him from every evil work, which is an earnest that he will "save him unto his heavenly kingdom." The final salutations are followed by a prayer for the abiding presence of the Lord with the spirit of this new leader of his forces. The one great theme that had filled Paul's life, crowded his teaching, echoed in every prayer, been manifested in every word of praise and joy, was "Grace." Hence there is no wonder that his last prayer for Timothy is, "Grace be with you."

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is the nature of all Paul's Epistles?
2. What distinguishes these two Epistles from all the rest?

#### I. Philemon.

1. What is its thesis?
2. Defend its place in the canon.
3. Give the time and place of writing.
4. Who are the parties named and position of each?
5. Why does Paul write this letter?
6. What was the attitude of the world toward slavery?
7. What is the position of this Epistle on slavery?
8. What is Paul's attitude toward the slave?
9. Why does Paul include the members of Philemon's household and the church in a personal letter?
10. Show how the apostle approaches his request.

11. Indicate the play on the name "Onesimus."
12. Upon what does Paul base his request?
13. What is to be Philemon's attitude toward his former slave?
14. Show how he reinforced his request.

## II. 2 Timothy.

(Study analysis, text and comment.)

1. Whence this Epistle and what its main thought?
2. What changes worked since the writing of the First Epistle?
3. What personal dangers threatened Timothy?
4. What responsibilities are emphasized?
5. What in this Epistle confirms the theory of second imprisonment?
6. Why so anxious about Timothy?
7. How is the influence of Paul's approaching death manifested in the introduction?
8. Give Paul's charge to Timothy, incident to God's gifts.
9. Enumerate the graces in Christ.
10. Give the charge to church and preacher incident to present crisis.
11. Give Paul's declarations of confidence and victory.
12. Upon what foundation does Paul build all his teaching?
13. Discuss the doctrine of sanctification as illustrated.
14. How bring men to repentance?
15. Describe the coming apostasy and compare with 1 Timothy.

## DIVISION II. HEBREWS

In its specific characteristics, Hebrews, in its formal and some of its material aspects, is in contrast to the Pauline Epistles. It is not so much of an Epistle as a treatise on the final revelation of God to man and the abiding priesthood of Jesus Christ, for which all other ages and agencies existed. Its purpose is to show the superiority of the Christian economy over the Jewish and patriarchal dispensations, and the perfected worship of the church.

## LESSON XIII.

### Hebrews: The Sacerdotal Epistle. Christ: The Perfect Revelation and Mediator

#### I. AUTHORSHIP

The authorship is not known. However, we know he was not an apostle, because he says this great salvation, "having at first been spoken through the Lord, was confirmed unto *us* by them that heard: God also bearing witness with *them* by signs and wonders and by manifold powers" (Heb. 2: 3, 4). This statement could not have been made by one of the twelve nor Paul, because they all possessed the confirmation of "signs, wonders and manifold powers," and Paul declares that he received not his gospel from man, but from the Lord (Gal. 1: 16, 17). This thesis is unlike the Epistles of Paul, in that it lacks salutation and personal greetings. The author, however, knew members of the Pauline circle (13: 23) and some disciples in Italy (13: 24), and he was evidently well known by the Christians addressed.

The Judaism of Hebrews is not that which Paul combated in his Law and Gospel Epistles. Paul's was Pharisaic and scholastic, and the law that he declared was nailed to the cross was ceremonial; while the Judaism of Hebrews is of the priesthood and temple, where the law is sacerdotal, which is

fulfilled in the church and its worship. Paul was meeting the Judaism of the scribes and schoolmen; this author is appealing to priests and people. The author's temple was not the one condemned by Christ, and where Paul was almost torn asunder, but it was the ideal temple of a colonial conception. He has no sharp antitheses as Paul in Adam and Christ, the flesh and spirit, the law and gospel, works and faith; but he deals in types and antitypes, shadows and substance, the symbolic and real. The law he considers is not abolished, but fulfilled.

He is limited by his laws of worship, and hence does not go back to Adam nor forward to the rejection of the Jews nor the acceptance of the Gentiles; yet he is more emphatic as to the perfection and permanence of the gospel. The meaning and philosophy of Christianity are made more intelligible. The Herodian temple gives way to the spiritual temple, the church, in which God dwells; the Aaronic priesthood is succeeded by the eternal priesthood of Jesus; animal sacrifice ceases because of the perfect sacrifice. The majesty and permanence of the new and abiding order is secured by its Founder, who is greater than Moses, the prophets, the fathers and the angels; He is appointed heir of all things and he created all things, he is upholding all things, he is the Saviour, and the very effulgence and image of God.

This position is not contradictory to Paul's, but supplementary to it. He develops truths that Paul omitted, but which are necessary for the fullest



understanding of the plan and purpose of God as revealed in Christ and the church.

## II. CONTENTS

### THE FINAL REVELATION TO MAN, AND MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

In the introduction, the author begins with the statement of the only ground of a true religion; God and revelation, God "hath spoken." He at once contrasts the revelation of God in the old and in the new dispensations. In the old it was fragmentary and lacked unity, which made it unintelligible save as words have meaning without the unity of a sentence. In the new economy, "at the end of these days," God unified his message in that "he hath spoken unto us in his Son." Even the messages of the prophets are not understood without him. He is so great, so universal, so human, so divine, that he contains in himself all truth, love, wisdom, knowledge and glory. Deny the incarnation, and you make the whole Bible an enigma. The mystery of the book, which was hidden from the foundation of the world, is explained in his person, who is the fullness of the revelation of God.

This greatness is revealed in the following statement, "Whom he hath appointed heir of all things," which refers to the promises made to Abraham and David. "All ages were made through him," which answers the ever-present questions, the whence, whither and why of human existence. In his nature he is "the effulgence of God's glory." As the

sun's rays are not reflected, but are of the sun itself, so the Son of God is of the Father. "He is the very image of his substance." The Son revealed the Father, not in words only, not in acts only, but in his own divine personality. This agrees with Christ's own statement, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In his activities, he not only created all things, but "upholdeth all things by the word of his power." Thus the writer contends that he is not a created being, but the creating, sustaining and abiding presence of God in all things. All history proclaims his presence and power. The author reserved the greatest statement of his work and revelation for the last. "Having made purification of sins" refers to his priestly function and activity, and is the supreme revelation of the Father's love. "Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" refers to his kingly function and activity, and as the supreme Lord of the church and angels he reveals God's glory and majesty. Thus the supreme and final revelation of God is in the Son of God, the eternal Priest-King. By introducing it in this way the author gives a statement of what will soon become the most wonderful presentation of the philosophy and typology of God's people. He does not mention the revelation of God through Moses and the law in his introduction, because his largest task in the book is to show that the new order is permanent and abiding, for which the old prepared the way. This conception of God and Christ is Pauline in spirit, though argued out from a distinctive viewpoint.

**1. The Son's Superiority as Priest-King.**—The first division of the Book of Hebrews is devoted to the superiority of the revelation of God in his Son, "at the end of these days" of partial revelations, to all the previous means and dispensations.

The Hebrews believed that their system of worship was ministered by angels, and hence was supernatural. The author first proves the superiority of the Son over the angels by seven quotations from the Old Testament. The first two show Christ's pre-eminence in relationship to God. The third shows that the angels are commanded to worship him. The next three show his superiority in service and consequent honor. The seventh proves his equality with the Father in sharing his throne, and that "all authority in heaven and earth are given unto the Son" until all enemies shall be subject to him.

Then follows a befitting exhortation and warning. Since the Son is so far above the angels, by so much more his revelation should be heeded. If the word spoken by angels proved steadfast, and every apostasy was punished, much more will the speech of the Son prove steadfast, and those who defy his powers shall be placed under his feet.

His service to man is greater than the angels', because he is identified with man, thus honoring humanity and manifesting God to man. He was made "lower than the angels for a little while," and thus "tasted of death for every man." In his humiliation he conquered sin and death, and is now crowned with glory and honor. His glory is

shown in his unity with his brethren, whom he enables to triumph over death and sin. But their final superiority is to be manifested in Christ as the seed of Abraham, who, with the children of God by faith in him, is to bring to naught the devil, who hath the power of death. This the angels could not do. They could cast him out of heaven, but redeemed humanity, through the grace of God, shall overcome him.

The author now presents his second line of argument to establish the superiority of the Son; that is, his superiority over the honored leaders and sages of Israel. He is above Moses and Joshua, the man who delivered them from Egyptian bondage and the man who delivered to them the land of promise. These were but types of "lawgiver-prophet" who delivers the saints from their Egyptian bondage of sin, and leads them in the wilderness of their pilgrimage; also delivering to them the heavenly inheritance. He first institutes a comparison between Moses and Christ. Christ is Son, and heir over the spiritual house, of which the tabernacle was a type; in this Moses was a servant. If the servant is honored and the type is revered, how much more the One who, in his person and church, fulfills all that was meant by them.

Characteristic of the book, a solemn warning follows an accounting of the experience of Israel in the wilderness. Their hearts were hardened by unbelief, God was displeased, and they entered not into his rest. Not every one who was baptized into

Moses in the cloud and in the sea entered into the promised home. The argument from the reference is, how much more is this true of those who were turning away from the leadership of God's own Son. The reason why a nation perished in the wilderness is declared to be that "the word of hearing did not profit them, because it was not united by faith with them that heard." That offer of rest was but a type of the promise made through the Son. "Let us fear . . . lest any one of you should come short of it."

Moses prepared for the leadership of Joshua as the law of Moses prepared for the great Joshua-Jesus. He led the people in, but failed to give them rest, because they allowed sin to remain in their midst. What Joshua failed to do, the Son will do; and his own entering into his rest after his work on earth is an earnest of the rest that remaineth for the people of God. This section closes with a warning to Christians to put sin out of their lives, "that no man fall after the same example of disobedience." Thus God has spoken, and by his word all sin will be revealed.

The writer now passes to discuss the superiority of Christ to the priesthood. Our great High Priest is not the son of Aaron, but "Jesus, the Son of God." The son of Aaron passed through the veil into the Holy of Holies once a year, only with the blood of a sin-offering. This great High Priest has entered into heaven, that of which the former was a type. "This high priest can be touched with the feeling of all our infirmities" because he was

tempted, "*without sin.*" Then follows another exhortation, "Let us draw near with boldness;" and another, "Let us hold fast our confession." The two qualifications for a priest are sympathy with man and acceptance with God. These are fulfilled in Christ, the sinless, as they never were in the Aaronic priesthood.

The inspired writer recognizes their inability to grapple with such a question, because they had continued on the first principles of Christ to the neglect of the perfection in him. Because of this, they did not even understand the first principles of the oracles of God. Then follows the most awful warning against apostasy contained in the word of God.

The contrast is all the more striking between the Son of God and the sons of Levi. The writer begins by taking his readers back to Abraham, to whom was the promise. To him God confirmed his promise by an oath, both which promise and oath are fulfilled in the person of our High Priest, whose priesthood is like Melchisedec; in this he was not a priest by birth, but by nature. He began not at thirty years of age, but when he made the great sacrifice for the sins of the world. He ceased not to minister at fifty, but, like Melchisedec, serves so long as he lives, and since he liveth forever, his is the everlasting priesthood. The superiority of his priesthood was predicted in Levi offering tithes to Melchisedec through his father Abraham. The Levitical priesthood failed of perfection, while the superiority of Christ's priesthood is revealed in the fact that through him a better hope is given



to men, and through him they draw nigh unto God, and in him perfection is realized.

Having established the superiority of Christ, the author proceeds to discuss the superiority of resultant relationships of those who believe. They live under a better and permanent covenant; realize the perfect worship of which the tabernacle was only a type; and are sustained by better assurances than were God's people in times past. These privileges impl. responsibility, and their neglect brings certain condemnation. "If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment," and finally with assurance he declares, "We are not of those that shrink back into perdition; but of them that have faith unto the saving of the soul."

**2. The Potency of Faith in the Son of God.**—The treatise now passes into its second division, in which is described the power of faith and its blessings. He shows that faith has always been the fundamental principle of the person who is acceptable to God. The writer begins by a quotation from Habakkuk, to prove this position. This also confirms his warnings against apostasy and sin. Faith is the fundamental principle of life, while doubt and sin end in death. The first illustration is all-inclusive concerning the spiritual origin of all things. He then gives the roll of honor of the Hebrews, and declares that they were inspired by faith for every triumph. These all received not the promise, God having foreseen some better thing

concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect." These are all saved in the same Son of God as we, and the greatest glory of their service was in preparation for him.

• He introduces another practical exhortation, growing out of an excited imagination, in which he sees the amphitheater crowded with the victors of faith seated in review, while Christ, the Captain of the race and perfection of faith, stands at the end of the course to crown the faithful. He and his Spirit should be the greatest inspiration. Faith was the abiding condition of victorious life under the old dispensations, and is more truly so under the new.

Then follows a statement of the perils that beset the Christian; first, of failing to recognize the corrective chastisements of God; and, second, the neglect of his means of grace. This section closes with the exhortation to refuse not this revelation of the Son, the Priest-King of God, and that they render a service well pleasing to him.

### III. CONCLUSION: FAITH INSPIRED AND DIRECTED BY LOVE

The conclusion consists of a series of exhortations which emphasize the value of faith in the children of the kingdom of God's dear Son. Here he reaches his highest conception in that the manifestations of faith in the life of the believer should always be directed by love. The rule of faith is "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever," for the heart is established by grace, not

by ritual, nor afflictions of the flesh. We, as common priests in the church of God, are partakers of the altar whereon Christ is offered for us. Since Christ became our sin offering and suffered without the gate, we are to leave the old camp, and, entering within the veil, worship him anew. The fellowship of faith is expressed in doing good and bearing the message of salvation to others.

The writer's final paragraph is an appeal for the prayers of the church on behalf of the ministry, and the burden of his prayer for them. He explains the brevity of the treatise, which might have been extended indefinitely, and closes with a brief salutation and a prayer for the abiding grace of God.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is the theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews?

2. What is the peculiar form of this document called Hebrews?

3. What is the author's purpose?

#### I. The Authorship.

1. Discuss the authorship of Hebrews.

2. State the differences between the Judaism of Paul and that of the Book of Hebrews.

3. Note the differences in style.

4. What are the author's limitations and results of same?

5. How is this related to Paul's discussion of the law and its service?

## II. Contents.

(Study the analysis and comment together.)

1. With what grounds of a true religion does the Epistle begin?

2. What is the fundamental difference between the revelation of God "of old" and of the new?

3. How alone can we understand the old?

4. What revelations enumerated of the Son?

5. How is the supreme and final revelation of God made to man?

6. Name the three classes to whom the Priest-King is superior.

7. Give and discuss the points in which Christ is above the angels.

8. How is Christ superior to Moses?

9. How is he superior to Joshua?

10. Name the points in which his priesthood excels the Jewish.

11. Give the various warnings and exhortations in the first seven chapters.

12. Show the connection of each with the preceding argument.

## **DIVISION III. THE GENERAL EPISTLES**

This division consists of the Epistles of James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John and Jude. They are called the general, or catholic, Epistles because they are not addressed to any particular church or individual, but to the church universal, or a wide circle of readers. The term does not refer to the general character of their teaching, nor to the orthodoxy of the doctrines contained, as is sometimes claimed.

James emphasizes the practical side of Christianity, and the mastery of Jesus Christ. Peter's thesis is obedience and the promises of God connected therewith. John presents the Christ as the manifestation of God's love, and the fellowship with God of His loving children. Jude's Epistle is a complement of Peter's message, and declares that there is no place for the rebellious spirit either in heaven, among the Gentiles, in Israel or in the church of Christ. With this brief introduction we proceed to our first lesson in this division.

## LESSON XIV. JAMES

### Christ the Master, and His Bond-servant

James has but one vital point in his Christology, which is this: Christ is the Master who has bought us with his own blood, and hence has a right to the undivided service of his bondservant. The Epistle not only emphasizes the practical side of Christianity, but the ethics of the Christian religion are emphasized here as in none other of the apostolic writings.

#### I. THE AUTHOR

The author designates himself as "James, the bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (Jas. 1: 1). There were three persons by this name mentioned in the New Testament—James, the son of Zebedee and brother of John; James, the son of Alphæus, another of the twelve, known as James the Less (Matt. 10: 2, 3; Mark 3: 17, 18; Matt. 15: 10), and James the Lord's brother, who was not one of the twelve (Matt. 13: 55; Mark 6: 3; John 7: 5; Gal. 1: 19). It was James the Lord's brother who was found among the disciples after the resurrection (Acts 1: 14; 1 Cor. 15: 7; Gal. 1: 19) and who wrote the Epistle. It is this James who became a pillar in the Jerusalem church. It was to him that Peter sent the news of his release from prison (Acts 12: 17). He presided over the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 13-



21). He, the Lord's brother, received the report of the apostolic labors of Paul on his return to Jerusalem, just before his imprisonment (Acts 21: 18). He was a man of great power, and the fact that he was the Lord's own brother doubtless had much to do with assigning him a place among the leaders of the Jerusalem church. He was a learner in the synagogue, and hence his view of the gospel is modified by its practical teachings. To James the gospel is "the inner law of the heart." He was well known to the early church, but particularly to the Jewish Christians, of which element he was leader. Josephus tells us that James was stoned to death in 62 A. D. for departing from the law of Moses.

## II. THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE

It is probable that this is among the earliest of the New Testament books. The Epistle was evidently written while James was prominent in the Jerusalem church, and, being so well known, he needs no introduction to his readers (Jas. 1: 1). The fact that this Epistle was not generally accepted into the canon until the third century can be explained on the ground that it remained for a long time in possession of Jewish Christians while the church became prevailingly Gentile.

The proof-texts of the Epistle are the sayings of Jesus (Jas. 1: 22, cp. Matt. 7: 21, 26; Jas. 2: 5, cp. Luke 6: 20; and Jas. 5: 12, cp. Matt. 5: 37). He takes Christ's own viewpoint in regard to the gospel and life. Throughout the entire Epistle he

attacks the errors of life and not of doctrine. Paul attacked those errors of doctrine that resulted in a false and evil life.

The Epistle was addressed to the Jewish Christians dwelling beyond Palestine (Jas. 1: 11), and exhorts them as "brethren" and "beloved brethren" (Jas. 1: 16, 19; 2: 1; 3: 1, 10). He speaks of them as having been "begotten by the word of truth" (1: 18) and as "believers in Christ" (2: 1).

The conditions that called forth the letter were the many trials and temptations of the Jewish Christians (Jas. 1: 2, 12), the oppression of the poor by the rich (1:9-11), works belying faith (1: 19-27; 2: 14-26; 3: 13), sins of tongue (3: 1-12), of division and strife (3: 13-18), of pleasure (4:1-10), of pride (4: 13-17), and of oppression (5: 4). At base what these Christians needed was not "to be hearers only, but doers of the word," or, by hearing, a vital faith that will be manifested in character that is built on a rock, and by their fruits they are to be known (Matt. 7: 15-27). It is upon the principle of *faithfulness* rather than works that the Epistle may best be analyzed. It is faith in the master that makes a faithful servant, and that faithfulness is manifested in service. (Introduction 1:1.) Faithfulness to Christ the secret of victory over temptation (1: 2-25). Faithfulness to men, as fellow-servants (1: 26; 2: 26). Faithfulness in control of the tongue (3: 1-18). Faithfulness manifested in purity of character (4: 1-17). Faithful and faithless contrasted and rewards of each (5: 1-20).

### III. CONTENTS OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

In the brief introduction of his Epistle, James announces the theme of his entire treatise in designating himself as "James, a bondservant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ." After a simple word of greeting to the Christian Jews of the dispersion, he proceeds to discuss the value, nature and purpose of trials and temptations.

He divides temptations or trials into two kinds—those of circumstances and of lust. The trials of circumstances should be counted a joy, because they are of the Lord, and through faith and patience bring perfection. In every such trial God will provide for every need if we ask him. The temptations of the lusts of the flesh are not of God. These can only be overcome by love, and the man that endureth such shall receive the crown of life. Then he contrasts the offspring of lust and the children of God who are "brought forth by the word of truth." The end of one is death; the end of the other is to be a kind of firstfruits of all God's creatures. As such, the responsibility of putting away wrath, filthiness and malice is pressed home, and they are urged to receive with meekness the ingrafted Word and to do it, by which they shall be able to save their souls.

The next division of the Epistle deals with faithfulness to fellow-servants. He introduces the subject with a contrast between vain and pure religion. Pure religion has in it not only faith in God, but service for those needing aid, and purity of life.

The marked failures are in those who set themselves up to judge rather than to serve their brethren; those who are enticed by riches. If they so live, they have returned to the law by which they are condemned. The only corrective is to "so speak and do as to be judged by the law of liberty." The only faith that will profit is that manifested in service to our fellow-men. This he declares is no new principle. The activities of faith are illustrated by the works of Abraham, which projected Godward in offering up Isaac, and by Rahab's, which were manifested in her service to God's people. Here he reaches the basic truth of his Epistle when he declares: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."

The faithful servant of God and Christ is manifested in nothing more than in the control of the tongue. He begins this section by a solemn warning to public teachers. The perfect man is he who stumbleth not in word. Man can govern anything else easier than he can control the tongue. He gives forever the test of worldly wisdom which produces jealousy, factions and an opposition to the truth of the meek and lowly Christ. The works of the wisdom which is from above are purity, peace, gentleness, humility, mercy, faith and sincerity; "and the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace by them who make peace."

The last division of the Epistle discusses the faithfulness of the bondservant manifested in purity of life. The most manifest failures are in

those who war and lust—in those who are enticed by the friendship of the world. God resisteth such, but giveth a greater grace to the humble by which they may conquer. He closes with this exhortation, to cleanse your hands, purify your hearts, and repent of your sins. “Subject yourselves to God and resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” Then he states again the law so often given by the Christ: “Whosoever humbleth himself in the sight of God shall be exalted.” He again follows out Christ’s teaching against judging a brother, because there is only one lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy. They were not saved to be judges, but to work that which is good, and he affixes a final negative test: “To him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” In other words, the test criticism of evil is a demonstration of good works.

The conclusion of the Epistle is a solemn warning to the oppressors and greedy, a wonderful exhortation to the oppressed and needy, and for purity of speech. His last words are an exhortation to prayer, praise, confession of sins and the salvation of the erring.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What are the General Epistles and why so called?
2. Give the thesis of each.
3. Show the doctrinal relation of James to Romans.
4. Who is the James who wrote this Epistle?

5. Tell what is known of his life and service.
  6. To whom is this Epistle written?
  7. Why so long rejected from the canon?
  8. Trace the teachings of Jesus repeated in James.
  9. What were the conditions that called forth this letter?
  10. Give the main divisions of the Epistle.
  11. Name the subdivisions of each main division.
  12. Discuss the nature and value of trials and temptations.
  13. Give the elements of pure religion.
  14. Discuss the doctrines of faith and works.
  15. Discuss man's duty to God as set forth.
  16. Discuss the Christian's duty to man, in state, church and family.
  17. Discuss man's duty to self as set forth.
  18. Give the source of victory and its honors.
  19. Give the warnings and exhortations of James.
  20. Give the basic truths of the Epistle.
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## LESSON XV.

### 1 AND 2 PETER

#### The Obedience to Christ the Lord

Peter writes as an eye-witness, and makes everything hinge upon the cross and Christ's coronation (1: 18, 19; 2: 24; 3: 18, cp. Acts 2: 29-40). The



duties enjoined are based upon his suffering (2: 21; 3: 18; 4: 13), his resurrection (1: 3), and his exaltation (3: 22; 4: 11). Christ, to Peter, is the living stone and Christians are of like nature, built into a spiritual house for a holy priesthood (2: 4-8). He insists upon submission to the lawfully constituted authorities for the Lord's sake (2: 13-17). He preaches forgiveness upon the grounds of humility and obedience. This he declares to be the condition laid down of God in every dispensation. This is the law of pardon foretold by the spirit of Christ in the prophets to Israel. This is the condition announced unto them by the prophets and apostles (1: 10-12). Lest some one should think this condition of salvation began with Israel, and was fully revealed through them that preached the gospel by the Holy Spirit, Peter declared this to be the Spirit's message of salvation for all times, and cites the instance of the salvation of Noah and his family. Christ preached in the spirit to these spirits now imprisoned, which aforetime were disobedient in the days of Noah. Noah and his family believed and obeyed the Spirit's message of Christ's "suffering for sins once, that he might bring them to God." In their obedience they were saved through water, "which also in the antitype doth now save you, even baptism" (1: 10-14; 3: 18-22, cp. Acts 2: 36-40). Baptism without the Holy Spirit's testimony, belief and the spirit of obedience in the disciple is naught; with these it is God's means of salvation. Instead of teaching a salvation to departed spirits, Peter is

placing a climax on his initial message of salvation which is to "all those who are afar off."

## I. 1 PETER: OBEDIENCE OF FAITH IN CHRIST THE LORD

This Epistle is one of the best authenticated books of the New Testament. It has been attested by the unanimous voice of the early church Fathers.

**1. The Author.**—In the introduction he designates himself as "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ." He was one of the twelve—"Simon, son of Jonas," of the city of Bethsaida (John 1: 44). He was married, and moved to Capernaum to be near the Master (Matt. 8: 44). Simon means a hearer, but Jesus changes his name to Peter, meaning a stone, upon his confession of the Messiahship, involved in the truth of His being the Son of God (Matt. 16: 15-18, cp. 1 Pet. 2: 5). The Lord not only designated him as the one who should use the keys of the kingdom in opening the door of the church both to Jews and Gentiles (Acts 2: 10), but "when thou hast turned again, establish thy brethren," was the commission given him of the Lord. In this Epistle he is doing this very work.

The letter abounds with references to his own experiences. That a letter from Peter should be practical in character, as this one is, is no more than might be expected from what the Gospels have to say of him. He was prompt, even impulsive, in word and action. He was usually the spokesman for the apostles, which marks him as a leader of men. He was accompanied by his wife

in his apostolic labors (1 Cor. 8: 5), which is the only reference to his work after the council at Jerusalem (Acts 15: 7-11). He evidently was crucified as Jesus predicted (John 21: 18, 19). Tradition has it that he was crucified with his head downward, not counting himself worthy to die as his Lord.

**2. Writing of the Epistle.**—It was written from Babylon, where there were more Jews than in Jerusalem. Peter's ministry was assigned to the circumcision, and hence it is more reasonable to take the literal meaning of the reference to the church "in Babylon" (1 Pet. 5: 13). It is addressed to "the sojourners of the Dispersion" in Asia Minor. These churches were established as a result of Paul's labors, and for whose welfare he was solicitous during his ministry. They were now undergoing severe persecution. These things taken together might indicate that the Epistle was written after they were deprived of such in the death of Paul. I am inclined to believe "the Dispersion" refers to the dispersion of Christians (Acts 8: 4), rather than to "dispersion of the Jews." It would be a mistake to restrict the Epistle to Jewish Christians, as in James, because he speaks of those who were not Jews (1: 14); to those who in times past had no share with God's people (2: 10); to those who wrought the will of Gentiles (4: 13). They were strangers and sojourners. Their true home could never be made among their heathen surroundings. They were falsely accused and misunderstood by those about them. This, however,

is just what Peter had heard the Lord say should come upon his disciples, and he repeats the Saviour's commands to them with the promised blessings of obedience.

Peter presents a Christ worthy of their obedience and trust. He is gracious (2: 3), the living stone (2: 4), the elect, precious (2: 4, 6). Believers are acceptable to God through Christ Jesus (2: 5). He that believeth on him shall not be ashamed (2: 6); to unbelievers is a stone of stumbling (2: 8). He suffered for us (2: 21); he is our example (2: 21, 22). He was sinless in act and word (2: 22, 23). He committed himself and his cause to God (2: 23). He bore our sins in his own body (2: 24). By his wounds we are healed (2: 24). He is the shepherd and bishop of our souls (2: 25). He was raised from the dead (3: 21). We are to be glorified through Jesus Christ (4:11). His are the glory and dominion forever (4: 11).

For further study of the contents of Peter, study the text by aid of the Analysis.

## II. 2 PETER: OBEDIENCE OF KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST THE LORD

This Epistle, unlike the First Epistle of Peter, does not seem to have been well known in the early church, nor to have been largely quoted. We do not know why this was so, nor why there were doubts of its genuineness in the third and fourth centuries. It first appeared as one of the canonical books of the New Testament in the Council of Laodicea, 366 A. D. It was confirmed by the

third Council of Carthage, 397 A. D. The care manifested in these councils confirms its genuineness; that is, that it was written by the person whose name it bears. By the canonicity of a book, we mean that it has a right to belong to the New Testament, as a rule of faith and conduct. Its style, thought and purpose are admitted to be worthy of the apostle.

**1. The Author.**—The writer of this Epistle claims to be Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ (1: 1), and that this is the second Epistle that he had written to them (3: 1). He tells us that he was a companion of the Lord and an eye-witness of his majesty (1: 16). He realized that this was his final message, because his death was coming swiftly (1: 14, 15). He was present at the transfiguration (1: 18), and he knew some of the letters written by Paul to these same people (3: 16).

**2. The Occasion of the Writing.**—While the first Epistle was to strengthen Christians, and encourage them to obedience in the presence of enemies from without, this is to guard them in view of dangers threatening them from within the church. The aim of the Epistle is made most clear by the final exhortation, "Beware," "grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." There had grown up in the church a self-exalted lot of teachers known as "Gnostics, those possessed of knowledge." They professed to have a deeper and more mysterious interpretation of the gospel. This esoteric philosophy they named knowledge. They indulged in profitless speculations concern-

ing the nature of God and his manner of communication with the world by emanations. This involved "foolish questions" and "endless genealogies of angels," which led many astray. As an antidote for these heresies, Peter urges these Christians to seek after and grow in a "true knowledge" of God the Father and the Son. This true knowledge can come only to those who obey his commandments (John 7: 17). He shall know the Lord, who loves to do his will. This is the only way men may really know anything, and is a lesson against the vain speculations of any age.

The encouragement to this life of obedience is given in the text: "Seeing that his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." The work, though difficult, becomes not impossible, the danger not appalling, for it is not on them alone depends the victory Christ has promised to be with those who do his commandments all the days and to supply all their needs. Wisdom will be given that they may understand God's will and choose aright, strength for every burden, boldness to confess the Lord before men, and watchfulness lest they should "wax overconfident," as these teachers of error had done who were endangering the power of the church. Peter, as did Paul, warned Christians against those doctrines that manifest themselves in "heresy of life," that make men barren and unfruitful in the Lord. That is the seal of false teaching. The author shows how they may recognize these false teachers (chap. 2), and declares



that the fires of God's wrath are "reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men." "In your faith supply courage, and in courage knowledge, and in knowledge self-control," expresses the movement in these two Epistles. In the first Epistle faith sustained the obedient; in this it is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. The end of such an active, fruitful life is salvation.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

1. What is the general thesis of the Epistles of Peter?

2. Upon what does Peter make everything hinge?

3. Upon what grounds does he enjoin every duty?

4. Give a sketch of Peter's life.

5. To whom is the first Epistle addressed?

6. What does Peter ascribe to Jesus Christ?

#### I. 1 Peter.

1. Discuss election as presented by Peter (1: 1, 2).

2. How are children begotten and born into the kingdom?

3. Describe the inheritance of saints.

4. Give the value of our salvation.

5. Describe the spiritual temple and its service.

6. What practical duties are incumbent on a Christian?

7. Give the principles of endurance under persecution.

8. How does baptism save?

9. What transitions are wrought by faith?

10. Give his final exhortation.

11. What are a believers' duties to God and Christ?

12. What are his duties to the church?

### III. 2 Peter.

1. Discuss the canonicity and genuineness of 2 Peter.

2. What does the author claim for himself?

3. What was the occasion of writing this Epistle?

4. How alone may we have a true knowledge of truth?

5. What kind of doctrines are they warned to shun?

6. To whom is the second Epistle written?

7. Give his definition of the knowledge.

8. Upon what evidence does he establish the claims of Christ?

9. What of these false teachers?

10. Describe them and their lives.

11. Give the assurance of Christ's presence.

12. Describe the day of the Lord.

13. Give the relation of knowledge and steadfastness.

14. What does Peter teach concerning God?

15. Give his teaching concerning the Christ, the Son of God.

16. What does he teach concerning the way of salvation?

17. Discuss the judgment and eternal life.

18. What does he say regarding the end of the world?

## LESSON XVI.

### 1, 2 AND 3 JOHN

#### **Christ and Fellowship with God**

The fundamental thesis of these Epistles is fellowship in the truth of God, and in the kingdom of Christ, which is the kingdom of truth. They strongly resemble the fourth Gospel, which is more a Gospel of truth than of facts. In the first Epistle of John the fellowship discussed is fellowship in the light, love and life of God, as manifested by faith in Jesus Christ. In the second Epistle, it is fellowship in the truth of God as revealed in Christ, while in the third Epistle the fellowship is the fellowship of the saints. The most profound of his teachings are manifested in the most practical ways.

#### **I. THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN**

This is probably the last catholic Epistle, the last apostolic message, to the whole church. If the second and third Epistles were written later, they were addressed to individuals and not to congregations. The Epistle is catholic in the truest sense. It is addressed to no particular church or district, and it deals with the general and vital questions of the church's life and its hold on the life of God.

This Epistle may be compared with the fourth Gospel with profit. There is the same emphatic repetition of keywords and phrases; such as,

“abide,” “be of God,” “be of the truth,” “light,” “life,” “eternal life,” “love.”

There are larger coincidences of doctrines. Compare 1 John 1: 1 with John 1: 1, 14; 20: 27. 1 John 1: 2 with John 3: 11; 19: 35. 1 John 5: 13 with John 20: 31. 1 John 1: 3 with John 17: 21. 1 John 1: 4 with John 16: 24. 1 John 1: 1-4 with John 1: 1-18.

The Gospel was written that men might have faith and life; the Epistle was written that believers might know they had life, and the connection of that life with God through Jesus Christ. In the Gospel the divine life is manifested in those who believe. The Gospel declares the truths of God as revealed in Jesus Christ; the Epistle proclaims this truth revealed in the fellowship of the Christian with God and man. The Gospel declares the way of life through the incarnate Son; the Epistle shows the manifestations of that life in the children begotten of faith and living obedience. The theme of the entire Epistle is fellowship with God, into which Christians are brought by their union with Christ and manifested in their love and service for man, the object of his love and sacrifice.

**1. The Author.**—Although no name is attached to the Epistle, the writer is doubtless the apostle John, the same as the author of the fourth Gospel. It is supposed that John left Jerusalem about 67 A. D., when large numbers of Christians left the city in anticipation of the siege and according to the warning of the Master. He is later an exile on

the isle of Patmos, and it was uniformly believed by the early church that John ended his life-work in Ephesus, near the close of the first century. It is likely that this Epistle was written from the latter city near the end of his ministry.

John was the son of Zebedee and Salome (Matt. 27: 56; Mark 15: 40), and brother of James the martyr (Mark 3: 17; Acts 12: 1, 2). They were people of means (Luke 8: 3) and influence. They had hired servants (Mark 1: 20). "John possessed his own house" (John 19: 27), and was well known of the high priest (John 18: 15). He was designated as "that disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 19: 26). He enjoyed special privileges in the ministry of Jesus, and together with Peter he is the principal character in the early Jerusalem church (Acts 3: 1; 8: 25). Little is known of his apostolic labors after this time.

**2. The Occasion of Writing.**—The letter was intended primarily for the churches in Asia Minor, where the idle speculations considered by Paul in the Colossian letter had developed to the subverting of the faith of the elect. The false teachers described and denounced by Peter were still active and opposing Christ. These questions turned on the nature of Christ: "Was he a mere man?" "Was the suffering Jesus separate from the sinless Christ?" "Was his human life a mere phantasmal semblance?" (2: 18; 4: 3; 5: 21, cp. 2: 19-23). John sums up his purpose in the words, "These things I have written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that you may know that

you have eternal life and that you may believe on the Son of God" (5: 13).

**3. The Contents of the Epistle.**—The central thought is fellowship with God through the incarnate Son of God. Into this fellowship believers are brought by their union with Christ. This subject is discussed under three heads: Fellowship in light, in love, in life. These overlap because they are interdependent.

In the introduction, John declares his knowledge of the divine Son of God and the certainty of eternal life in "the word." "We have heard, . . . have seen, . . . beheld, and our hands handled" the "Word of life." The Word, which is intangible and immeasurable, became flesh which could be seen, heard and handled, that the apostles might be qualified witnesses of the fellowship of God with man. John rejoices not only in the memory of that fellowship, but in its continuance, which is the privilege of every believer. This he declares to be the initial purpose of writing. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." The first message of "the Word of Life" is, "I am the way, the truth and the life; "he that followeth after me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." To forget the light of this revelation is to misunderstand the other revelation that "God is love." The disciple is exhorted to walk in the light, which can only be the part of the sinless. Sin separated man from God, and always will. Because of man's imperfection there is need of constant cleansing, and this is in "the blood of Jesus



his Son." The light of his sinless life makes sin known, and that we might not sin, the sins of the past are forgiven through the obedience of faith, and by this we are brought into Christ, where we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. The test of light is love; the manifestation of love is obedience; the evidence of the same is in love of the brethren.

This light excludes the works of darkness, the power of sin, the love of the world, fear and shame, and the "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life," seed of which may be overcome by the word of God which abode in them. John doubtless remembered Christ's victory in his temptations. The false teachings of antichrists, who denied that Jesus is the Christ, involves also a denial of the Father and the Son. Such teachings are to be tested by the indwelling Spirit.

In the second division, John declares that God is love, and emphasizes our fellowship with God in love. The supreme manifestation of divine love is that we should be called the children of God, and the events leading thereto. The fullness of the light of love will be revealed when he shall be manifested and we shall attain unto his likeness. Then John introduces two contrasts: One between the children of God and of the devil, the other between the results of love and hate. The test of fellowship with God in love is love of the brethren and righteousness of life. Even the hate of men is to be answered by love. This is the proof of the new life. Love for God is manifested in doing

his commandments. If we keep his commandments, we shall abide in him, and by abiding in him we receive power to do his commandments, and the power dwelling in the Christian is greater than all opposition. Perfect love casteth out all fear. Faith attests the mission and power of the Son as Saviour of the world. This manifestation of love begets love in us, whereby we do his commandments. "If God so loved us, we should love one another," and "if a man say he love God and hate his brother, he is a liar." This is not merely a privilege, but a stern and positive duty. The most efficient way of revealing God's love for the world is through the love of his children for it.

The final thesis is fellowship with God in life. John reviews the experience of every Christian. We are begotten by faith in the "word of light," and born by obedience of love, and "his commandments are not grievous." It alone is the child of faith who lives the overcoming life with God. The witness of God to this victorious life is Jesus Christ, who came not with the water of baptism alone, but with the blood of cleansing also. The next witness is the Holy Spirit. The third is God himself. He intrusted the proclamation of the sonship of Jesus, not to prophets or angels, but himself declared, "This is my beloved Son," and by the power of the Holy Spirit of life overcame Satan in the temptation. The apostle declares that God testified by the "Spirit of life," "the water [or flood] of light," and the "blood of love," that Jesus is his Son. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God

is greater." "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." Any one who does not believe it, makes God a liar. God's final witness to the divinity of the Son is that "God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is alone in his Son."

This brings us to the positive knowledge of the conclusion. The apostle declared that he had written to them that they "might know" that they had eternal life, the power of prayer and the nature of sin. He bases his right to instruct them because he knew the power of God, the sinfulness of the world, the fact that the Son of God is come into the world, and that the Son himself had given him understanding and a knowledge of Himself, and "we are in him who is true." To know him is to know the true God and to have eternal life.

## II. THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

This and the third Epistle are of the private correspondence of the apostle. This Epistle was addressed to the "elect lady." It is uncertain whether a person or church is addressed. The subject of this Epistle is fellowship, as in the first Epistle, but in this case he emphasizes the value of truth in fellowship with God through Christ His Son.

**1. The Author.**—The internal evidence is strongly in favor of the same authorship as the first Epistle, and hence of the third also. Compare (1) 2 John 1; 3 John 1 with 1 John 3: 8. (2) 2 John 4; 3 John 3 with 1 John 4: 21. (3) 2 John 5;

1 John 2: 7 with John 13: 34. (4) 2 John 7 with 1 John 4: 1-3. (5) 2 John 9 with 1 John 2: 23. (6) 3 John 11 with 1 John 2: 29; 3: 6. (7) 3 John 12 with John 21: 24. (8) 3 John 13, 14; 2 John 12, 13 with 1 John 1: 4 and John 15: 11.

This Epistle seems to have been written after the longer Epistle bearing his name, and was probably written from Ephesus.

2. "**Truth**" is the inner link connecting the believer with the light, love and life of God. "Grace, mercy and peace" are the subjective effects of truth, and the obedience of love is the outward result. He then declares the joy of his "love in truth" that he had found the elect lady's children walking in truth. "Truth" is the keyword of the Epistle. Walking in truth and obeying the ever "new-old commandment" is the true basis of fellowship with God.

Love is obedience to light, and every one must be judged by the light he possesses. Hence his condemnation in the last division against antichrists and the exhortation to watchfulness. "Because love is walking in light, the test of love is light." Any consent to darkness or doubt, out of a so-called Christian hospitality, is not true love. Her first love should be for the truth manifested in the Son of God. Any sympathy or hospitality which compromises that truth or encourages a teacher of error is false and contrary to love for the Master. The peculiar teaching of this Epistle is that this love and life are dependent on light and truth. To deny the truth is to destroy the fellowship with

God, which is life. True love can not exist with falsehood, nor dwell in darkness.

### III. THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN

1. The authorship is discussed in the introduction to the second Epistle. It was addressed to Gaius. There are at least three persons by this name mentioned in the New Testament: Gaius of Macedonia (Acts 19: 29), Gaius of Derbe (Acts 20: 4, 5), and Gaius of Corinth (Rom. 16: 23; 1 Cor. 1: 14). It is likely that this is the Gaius of Corinth, since Paul speaks of his hospitality for which he is here commended (5-7). This man is a believer (verse 2), and especially beloved of the writer (1, 14). He was an exemplary Christian (3, 4). He is a man of prominence (9). All these things mark him as the friend of Paul and the church.

2. The purpose of the Epistle is to guard the fellowship of the saints in God, and to utter a warning against division in the church, which is always due to a lack of love.

For the contents of the Epistle study the text in connection with the Analysis. The central statement of the Epistle is, "He that doeth good is of God; he that doeth evil hath not seen God."

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the general theme of these Epistles?
2. Give the viewpoint of each.
3. What is the difference between truth and fact?
4. Show the catholicity of 1 John.

5. Compare the teachings of the Epistle with the Gospel.

6. What is the difference of purpose in writing this Epistle and the fourth Gospel?

7. Give a brief outline of John's life.

8. What was the occasion of writing?

9. Name the main divisions of the Epistle.

10. Discuss the purpose of incarnation. (Introduction.)

11. Discuss the duties growing out of attributes of God.

12. How freed from sin?

13. What does fellowship of light exclude from our lives?

14. Give the power of life of God.

15. Give the purpose of the book.

16. Name the things the author knew.

17. To whom was the second Epistle addressed?

18. Discuss its authorship.

19. Show that "truth" is the keyword.

20. What should be the Christian's attitude to teachers of error?

21. Give the outline of the Epistle.

22. To whom was 3 John written?

23. Give the analysis of the book.

24. Discuss each division and lessons therefrom.



## LESSON XVII. JUDE

### Loyalty to Christ and God

The fundamental thesis of Jude's Epistle is that there is no place for the rebellious spirit against the authority of God, either in heaven, among the Gentiles, in Israel or in the church. Some of the Jews who believed that the gospel freed them from the Mosaic law crept into the church, and took their liberty for license and blatantly defied all authority or restraint. Christ only nailed the ceremonial law to the cross and fulfilled the Sabbath in the tomb. The civil law was destroyed by the Romans. The moral law was fulfilled, or filled full, deepened and spiritualized. Every moral precept is intensified. This Epistle reveals the relation existing between the will of every sentient being and the authority of God.

#### I. THE AUTHOR

The question of the authenticity of this Epistle resolves itself into two questions: Is this Epistle the product of the apostolic age? If so, what person of that age, by the name of Jude, wrote it? Like the Epistle of James, this Epistle was not admitted to the canon by mistake, or carelessly. It was mentioned by Eusebius as one of the six or seven "disputed" books of the New Testament. It was listed in the Muratorian Canon (170 A. D.). Clement of Alexandria, who died in 202 A. D., quotes it. It was received among the canonical

books at the Council of Laodicea (363 A. D.), and confirmed at the Council of Carthage (397 A. D.). The early church did nothing with greater care than this. They undoubtedly had evidence that has not come to us. The question for this age is not, Should it be received as from the apostolic age? but, Should it be rejected? The only objection worthy of consideration at all is that "he quotes from an apocryphal book." This was practically settled by the time of Jerome.

The author introduces himself as the "brother of James" (1: 1). He was not one of the apostles, as we might infer from verse 17. James, the brother of the Lord, had become a pillar in the Jerusalem church and the leader of Jewish Christianity, and this simple introduction was sufficient. He was not an early disciple (John 7: 5). We know that he was married, not merely from the statement of Paul (1 Cor 9: 5), but from an interesting story told by Hegesippus and preserved by Eusebius. "Two of the grandsons of Jude were arrested and taken before Domitian as being of the royal family of David, and therefore dangerous to his rule. In answer to his questions they said they were of the family of David, but they were poor and humble persons who labored for their support and showed him their horny hands in proof. When questioned about the Christ and his kingdom, they said it was not of this world, etc. They were dismissed in contempt. Jude was most surely dead at this time, else he would have been taken in place of his grandsons.

## II. THE WRITING OF THE EPISTLE

Domitian began to reign in 81 A. D., and hence it was written before this date. It was likely written after the Second Epistle of Peter. That which Peter had predicted had already come to pass (Jude 4; cp. 2 Pet. 2: 1-3 and Jude 17, 18 with 2 Pet. 3: 1-4). The false teaching mentioned by Peter has already borne its evil fruit (cp. 2 Pet. 2: 1-3 with Jude 4, 8, 10, 13, 16). Jude elaborates some of Peter's passages (2 Pet. 2: 4 and Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2: 6 and Jude 7; 2 Pet. 2: 11 and Jude 9; 2 Pet. 2: 17 and Jude 12). That it was written to Jewish Christians is evidenced by the fact that the appeals to Old Testament facts and other Jewish statements known only to the Jews, without explanation; the fall of angels (6), the contention of Michael and the devil (9), and the prophecy of Enoch (14, 15). This is no cause for doubt, because Paul gives some facts about Moses not recorded in Exodus, and the author of Hebrews tells us some things about Abraham not given in the Old Testament.

As has been intimated, the heresy attacked by Jude is the heresy of life resultant from the heresy of doctrine.

## III. CONTENTS OF THE BOOK

In the introduction the author speaks of himself as a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James. He was therefore a brother of the Lord. With him this relationship was lost in doing the will of the Father in heaven (Matt. 12: 48-50).

The faithful he addresses as "them that are called," the "beloved in God, the Father," and those who are "kept for Jesus Christ." After pronouncing upon them the most beautiful benediction, he declares that he was giving all diligence in preparing for them a general treatise dealing with "our common salvation," but when he had heard of these vile and ungodly men who had crept into the church and were destroying its faith, he was constrained to write to them, exhorting them "to contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints." We can not but wish we might have had his teachings on "our common salvation," but, in the providence of God, this evidently is more needful.

In the first division of the book, he describes the heresy of life which threatened the church. He classes it as rebellion against God and Christ. These men had crept into the church, but had no right there. They were ungodly; took liberty for license; denied our only Master and Lord; were filled with doubt, rebellion, licentiousness, even sodomy; railed at dignitaries, not enduring reproof; they railed at things they knew not, like creatures without reason. They hated their brethren like Cain, they seduced them for hire like Balaam, and led in rebellion against God's appointed leaders like Korah. Like these, they shall perish. Their disturbance of the church and influence is described in a wonderful series of metaphors. Then he quotes the prophecy of judgment against them, and summarized their sins, calling

them murmurers, complainers, men walking in lust, and dishonoring God by showing respect to persons for gain.

In the second division, he gives the apostolic warning. In this they are described as mockers, who are marked by ungodly lusts, and by causing division in the church. They are sensual and have not the Spirit. To the faithful he has one supreme exhortation, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." This they may do by edifying themselves upon their most holy faith, by praying in the Holy Spirit, and by watching unto eternal life.

They had a duty not only to themselves, but toward their brethren who were being destroyed by the ungodly. They were to have mercy on those who were in doubt, to save some as out of the fire, but to hate their evil works.

In conclusion, he commits them to a Saviour who is able to guard them against all such assaults; to save, cleanse and give them exceeding joy in his presence. Here in the very conclusion he exalts the authority of God, our Saviour, as worthy of all glory, majesty, dominion and power. "Before all time" he was worthy of the worship of angels, and they who rebelled lost their estate. "now," both among Jews and Gentiles, they who reject it shall be destroyed. "Into all the ages" he is head over all things to the church.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the fundamental thesis of Jude?
2. What is the relation of the gospel to the law?

3. What is the revelation of this Epistle?
4. Discuss the authorship of the book.
5. Who was Jude?
6. Give the occasion of writing the Epistle.
7. Compare parallel passages in 2 Peter.
8. What evidence the book was written to Jewish Christians?
9. What is the apocryphal literature?
10. Upon what theme had he purposed to write?
11. Give his description of these ungodly men.
12. Prepare a brief sketch of all the facts alluded to:
  - (1) How God saved his people from Egypt.
  - (2) How He destroyed them because of unbelief and murmurings and rebellion.
  - (3) The history of Sodom and Gomorrah.
  - (4) The way of Bail.
  - (5) The error of Balaam and death of twenty-three thousand Israelites.
  - (6) The gainsaying of Korah.
  - (7) The history of Enoch.
13. What are the duties of the faithful?
15. How "keep in the love of God"?
16. Repeat his commitment and show its bearing on the situation.
17. From the Book of Jude give twenty manifestations of sin, and twelve results.
18. Make a study of the New Testament teaching concerning evil angels (Jude 6, cp. 2 Pet. 2: 4; Matt. 25: 41; Rev. 12: 7; Eph. 6: 12; Col. 2: 15; 1 Cor. 6: 3; Jas. 2: 19; 1 Thess. 3: 5; Mark 1: 13; Acts 26: 18).



## DIVISION IV. REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

### The Eternal Victory of Christ and the Redeemed

The only successful interpretation of the Book of Revelation is found in taking the general scope of the book. Any minute and detailed attempt that we have seen is unsatisfactory. There are some of the figures and visions used that to us, in our imperfect development and in the incomplete history of the church, seem unintelligible. We should hold our minds open to the truth and be ready to recognize its fulfillment when it comes. Any dogmatic teaching seems too much like the teaching of the Pharisees, who failed to recognize in the personal ministry of Jesus, their Messiah, because he did not fulfill their conceptions and dictums. The only satisfactory introduction is found in the text itself, which deals with the authorship, nature, origin, method and intention of the book. The first sentence constitutes its title and indicates its nature, origin and method. The key of the entire book is found in Christ's last charge to John: "Write, therefore, the things which thou sawest, the things which are and shall *come to pass* after these."

"The prophecy of this book" is that Christ and his church shall triumph over Satan and his king-

dom. Blessed is the man who understands this! The first divisions are: (1) The Christ; (2) his instruction to the churches whereby they may triumph; (3) the assurance of that final victory.

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## LESSON XVIII.

### Christ and His Messages to the Churches.

REV. 1:1-3:22.

These messages are not only his messages to the seven churches, but all that have existed from that time until the present. We have been unable to think of any other. Here the student will find a description of his own home church and Christ's message to it.

#### I. INTRODUCTION TO THE ENTIRE BOOK

It is the unanimous opinion of conservative critics that the Book of Revelation was written by John the apostle (Rev. 1: 1, 4, 9; 22: 8). The time of his exile to Patmos is uncertain, but the reason is evident (1: 9). Many modern critics believe that John wrote this book between 68 and 70 A. D., before the destruction of Jerusalem. Whether this be true or not, it is evident that considerable time had elapsed since the organization of these churches. They had endured persecutions and trials. They had developed congregational characteristics, and were beset by dangers which

the risen and glorified Lord and Saviour regarded with divine compassion.

Some have laid great stress on the difference in form and style between the Book of Revelation and the fourth Gospel; some to discredit his authorship of Revelation, others to disprove his authorship of the Gospel. Whatever difference there may be can be explained in view of the fact that this is prophecy, and that its imagery is decided largely by the apocalyptic visions of Ezekiel and Daniel. The Gospel is the product of brooding thought. It has been said that this is the most Jewish of all the New Testament books, while the fourth Gospel is the most Christian. This difference can easily be explained by the fact that Revelation is filling the outline of the Hebrew prophets. Besides, this is not the revelation of the Holy Spirit to John, in the ordinary sense of inspiration, but, as the opening words of the book indicate, it is "the revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants." This is Christ's last message to men. In these important ways it differs from any other book in the sacred library. It is not a book of church doctrines, but is primarily a book of judgment, and deals with the truths of divine government. In this we find ourselves in the realm of the Old Testament. It is the "I am," "the One who is, who was, and who is to come"—revealing his plan and purpose for the world in "the Son of man." He is exalting his church to the place promised to Israel.

## II. CONTENTS OF REVELATION—CHAPTERS 1-3

1. "The things which thou sawest."—These words evidently designate the first division of the book, and refer to the vision of glory that John saw when he beheld "the Son of man." Before even the introduction are the prologue and the threefold blessing: "Blessed is he that *readeth*, that *heareth*, that *keepeth* the words of this prophecy."

The introduction consists of the benediction for "grace and peace unto you," from the eternal One and his messengers; from Jesus Christ, the revealer of the eternal Father, the victor over Satan and the grave, the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him, because of his love and grace in forgiveness, inheritance and honor bestowed upon men, are due glory and dominion forever. This agrees with Paul's teaching concerning the regnancy of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15: 20-28). Then follows the central truth of the entire book, declaring that this glorious Christ shall be revealed in glory to both Jews and Gentiles, for the eternal One has decreed it.

In describing the vision of "the Son of man," John lays down the conditions most favorable for such a revelation. He had been faithful and patient in suffering for and in the testimony of the word of God and Christ, and he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day. In communion with his body and blood on the Lord's Day, faithful Christians

in every age receive their truest vision of their Christ. The vision of glory of which he was commanded to write is the most wonderful in human speech (Rev. 1: 12-18). When he saw, he *fell*, and the Son of man touched him with His hand of power, and gave him the assurance of hope. He also saw the relation of Christ to his church and the conquering of his gospel. Then was repeated the commission, which is the outline of the entire book.

**2. The Things Which Are.**—To understand this division, we must keep before us the vision of the One who moves in the churches, unifying them into the church of Christ, by his presence and authority. They were not the source of the light, but light-bearers. Thus the Lord, revealed in all the fullness of his glory, is concerned with the shining of the church in the midst of darkness. To each congregation he said, "I know thy works."

### III. THE SEVEN CHURCHES

**1. The Church in Ephesus,** apostolic in form and doctrine, but lacking in love. The Lord introduces himself as "he that holdeth the seven stars in his hand; he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden lampstands." The introduction is appropriate to their needs. It is evident that this church fulfilled the apostolic ideal as to organization; the ministry is proper; their opposition to false teaching and human standards is faultless. Outwardly everything is in perfect order. For this the Lord commends them (2: 2, 3). There

are seven—the perfect number—points of approval. But the eye of a loving Saviour sees one thing lacking. “I have against thee, that thou didst leave thy *first love*.” That is all. But now consider all this perfect form with love absent. It is like a splendid building without its bond of love which makes it a home. From what had they departed? Their “first love.” What is that? First love is the love of espousal (2 Cor. 11: 2, 3). He passes at once to his words of warning and counsel to the church, but what an awful rebuke he has given. For what does a church exist but to be thrilled with its love for Christ, the heavenly bridegroom, and with him to bring children into the family of God and to train them to love and honor him? The elements of first love are simplicity, purity, trust and real joy—joy expressed in enthusiasm. What is perfect form and order without these? The Ephesian church was commended for “works,” “toil,” “patience,” “hatred of evil men,” “true doctrine,” “endurance for his name,” “untiring service,” and “hatred of false works of the Nicolaitans.” A wife may be commended for faithfulness to her husband after love has gone, but she is to be pitied; so with a church. Then follows the promise: “To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life,” which is life with all the joy missed in this.

**2. To the church in Smyrna,** poor and persecuted. The Master introduced himself to these with all the dignity and power of his initial address to John: “The first and the last, which was dead



and is alive." This church was in the midst of great persecution. To these he is the living One who "possesses the keys of death and Hades." He has no word of condemnation, because persecution had purified the church. "But thou art rich" is worth more than seven times as many pronouncements on the Ephesian church. The promise is the one needed under such trials: "Be thou faithful until death, and I will give thee the crown of life. . . . He that overcometh shall not be hurt by the second death."

3. To the church at Pergamum: they had his name. The Christ represents himself as wielding the sword, which is the word of God, by which he overcame Satan, and by which they might be victorious. As a just Lord, he makes due allowance for them in view of this being Satan's abode. In it all, they had been loyal to the central fact of Christianity and preserved their faith in its Lord. The condemnation of the Lord is not against the entire church, but individuals who held the teaching of Balaam, and others who held the teaching of the Nicolaitans. The condemnation of the church was that they tolerated such persons. What was the teaching of Balaam? "Thou hast there some who hold the teaching of Balaam . . . to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit fornication;" or, in other words, they held a doctrine that excused, or led to, eating things offered to idols and fornication (Num. 22: 1-25; 33: 16). This doctrine, freely stated, is this: Seeing these are the covenant people of God, and no man can curse them, they

may indulge themselves. These, like Balaam, taught for hire. The teaching of the Nicolaitans resulted in the same license which threatened the life of the entire church and all Pergamum. To them the Master said, "Repent, or else I will come to thee quickly with the sword of my mouth," which is the word of death and judgment to all who live wickedly, as well as the manna of life to the pure in heart. This suggests the appropriate promises to the select.

**4. To the church at Thyatira,** given to corruption. To these he declares himself to be the Son of God, swift and terrible. Even in this church there were some things to commend. Their sins seem to be little different from those of Pergamum, except that the church had adopted this teaching and fostered a leader and was following her who had persecuted the prophets of God. Like Jezebel, she and her children should die the death that would make known the power of God. Then follow the appropriate warning and promise.

**5. To the Church in Sardis.**—"Thou art dead." The Christ here declares himself to be Lord of the churches and of their messengers. It was in failing to recognize this that they "had a name to live, but art dead." They had imperfectly comprehended his power and willingness to aid, and hence no work was completed. There were a few names in Sardis which did not defile themselves, and these few were struggling to keep this dead body alive. They were discouraged and the

church was "ready to die." These were doubtless trying to keep it alive by various devices, besides calling on Him who was its Lord and had all the messengers of all the churches at his command for their help. To the faithful he promises robes of white, and though the church be blotted out, their names should not be blotted out of the book of life, and he would confess them before the heavenly Father and his angels.

6. To the church in Philadelphia, the evangelistic church. The Christ introduces himself to this aggressive church as the holy and true One, who had the keys of the kingdom of promise. He is its royal Master and men must be admitted on his terms. He had set before them an open door which none could shut, and though they had only a little power, they had kept his word and honored his name, and he would give them victory and make their enemies to worship before them, and to know that he loved them. The Lord in all ages has thrown open the doors of opportunity to the missionary church, the church that has been faithful to its opportunities and has kept his word and honored his name. To the church at Philadelphia he has only a slight condemnation, more implied than expressed. Some had been hindered by the persecutions of those who said they were Jews, but were not. These, and the synagogue of Satan as well, shall be made to recognize the evangelistic church. Only such a church does he promise to keep from the hour of trial, which is to come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell upon the

earth. Such a church is a pillar in the temple of God.

7. *Laodicea*, the apostate church. Jesus is to such the faithful and true Creator, who made them for his own glory, which they have denied. For such a church he has no word of commendation. They were dignified, decorous, rich in this world and self-satisfied, but blind to the purpose for which they had been created. All he could promise to them was reproof and chastisement, if perchance some might repent. Since he had lived his life amid a self-righteous and spiritually blind people, and, having overcome, had sat down with his Father on his throne, he promises the same to those who would repent and overcome the inertia, hate and persecution of such a church.

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What is the most satisfactory method of interpreting the Book of Revelation?

2. Discuss the authorship, origin, nature and intention of the book.

3. Give the three divisions outlined in the text.

4. How does this book differ from all others in the Bible?

5. Give an analysis of the introduction.

6. Give the vision of glory seen by John.

7. Describe conditions in the *Ephesian* church and give Christ's message to them.

8. Do the same for *Smyrna*, *Pergamum*, *Thyatira*, *Sardis*, *Philadelphia* and *Laodicea*.

9. Give the introduction of the Christ to each church and show the appropriateness.

10. Give Christ's promise to each church or individual.

12. What was the teaching of Balaam and effect?

13. What the teaching of the Nicolaitans?

14. Why no condemnation of the Smyrna church?

15. What victories promised to the missionary church?

16. For what church did Christ have no word of commendation?

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## LESSON XIX.

### CHRIST AND THE KINGDOM

**Rev. 4:1-22:21**

#### I. OUR OBJECT

In general, we may say that this part of the book describes what was future in John's time; but a more important question now confronts us. Are we to consider this as strictly continuous, the events and visions following in chronological order, or are some of the visions synchronous; *i. e.*, each group containing a prophecy reaching from the time of writing to the end of the ages?

There are many who think the Revelation gives five descriptions of the end (Rev. 6: 12-17; 11: 15-

19; 14: 18-20; 16: 17-21; 20: 11-15). This would mark five parallel lines of events, each culminating in a vivid description of the final end of all things. Study these divisions in this way and compare with the analysis of Lesson XVIII. It is not our object to expound the Book of Revelation, but to encourage the student to the threefold blessing of reading, heeding and keeping the things written in this book (Rev. 1: 3).

## II. "THE THINGS WHICH SHALL COME TO PASS AFTER THESE"

1. It is evident that the third division of the Book of Revelation begins with chapter 4, and from there to the end we have the things which were foretold of the Lord, through John. With this division we are now concerned, having designed to make this a separate lesson. The things which John saw and "the things which are" were treated in Lesson XVIII.

2. Contents.—This division falls into three sections. The first with the preparation for the millennium (4: 1-18: 24), the second briefly describes the millennium, while the third has to do with the new heaven and new earth which are to follow.

The first section is introduced with a vision of the "heavenly order." At the center is a throne, and on it One who was declared to be holy and worthy to receive glory, honor and power from all created things. In his hand he holds a book which contained the program of the world's history, but the book was sealed. None in heaven was worthy



to break the seal and reveal the future, except the Lamb who was slain. Because of his victories over Satan and death, he is able to open the book and to carry out the plan of God. This is heralded by the many voices of the whole creation. The fundamental thought seems to be that holiness, love and sacrifice are the only victory; or that the progress of the world is by the way of the cross.

The events which follow are set forth in highly symbolic language, under the imagery of seals, trumpets, plagues and the fall of Babylon.

The first seal is opened, and one representing false authority "goes forth conquering and to conquer." The second is opened, and military carnage is manifested. The third seal is opened, and want and starvation follow commercial despotism. The fourth seal is opened, and death and sorrow fill the earth. Thus is set forth the nature of evil. When the fifth seal is opened, the cry of martyrs arises and they are robed in white. The sixth is immediately followed by the day of the wrath of the Lamb, and by the holding back of God's wrath and a vision of the redeemed. When the seventh seal was opened, all heaven was silent for half an hour, followed by the blast of seven trumpets, which may be traced as above.

The long-continued sin of man has been that of refusal to submit to God's authority, and consequently a devotion to the lower nature which brings the plagues of God upon him. Evil has done its worst, and now judgment begins without mercy, which results in a complete overthrow of

Babylon, which stands for fierce and organized iniquity in the history of mankind.

Then follows a brief description of the millennium, when Christ reigns instead of evil. Satan is released for a time, but finally cast into the lake of fire, and evil men are judged according to their works. Then follows the blessed consummation, the New Jerusalem filled with the sons of God, the marriage of the Lamb, a new Holy of Holies, and the restored paradise.

This all seems too good to be true, and John gives the assurance of God, the testimony of Jesus, and the mission of the Spirit and the church, to confirm the prophecy of this book. The Bridegroom declared, "I come quickly," and the church, his bride, answers, "Come, Lord Jesus."

### QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give the outlook of Revelation.
2. Are the church and the kingdom of God identical?
3. Are there five descriptions of the end or not?
4. What is to be the result of this conflict?
5. What is therefore the prophecy of this book?
6. Describe the throne from the text.
7. What was the sealed book?
8. Give the account of the opening of each seal.
9. Give an account of each trumpet.
10. Give in detail the parenthesis (10: 1-11: 14).
11. Give the plagues and significance.
12. Give an account of the fall of Babylon.

13. Outline the millennium.
14. What is the first resurrection?
15. Give the judgment of Satan.
16. What is the second death?
17. Describe the New Jerusalem, the new creatures, the new bride, the new Holy of Holies, the new paradise.
18. What assurances are given in the epilogue that these glorious things are true?
19. What warning concerning defacing this book?
20. What is the purpose of Revelation?

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## LESSON XX.

Use questions from 1 to 345 in the back of scholar's book.



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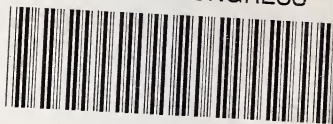
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